

THE COLONEL'S REBEL RELICS.

BY CORPORAL QUILP.

IN these piping times of peace, with the ever-widening gap of years between us and the days of the knapsack and sabre, it is difficult to recall all the prominent points of the soul-harrowing tale I am about to unfold, a tale whose sadly abrupt termination has cast a lasting gloom over the life of its principal hero.

In that very convenient time of reference, when one is not particular about being definite, "the other day," Mrs. Quilp, in overhauling her treasure-box, rather unexpectedly brought to light a relic of the war.

It was only a little wooden cross scarce three inches in length, rudely carved, and bearing very evident traces of jackknife architecture, and of a dull jackknife, at that. Rude as it was, Mrs. Quilp seemed to have preserved it with care, away down in the bottom of the box, along with faded roses and violets, and sundry bundles of faintly-scented love-letters, tokens of "undying affection" from the Adolphuses of Mrs. Q.'s youthful acquaintance. It was by the merest chance that I caught a glimpse of it, for she is wondrous chary of the contents of that box, is Mrs. Quilp.

As she held the cross up to the light for a

moment, looking at it with a curiously mixed expression of interest and amusement, I exclaimed in my most persuasive accents, "What's that, Mrs. Q.?"

"Law me, Quilp, don't you know? Why, that's the relic you sent me from Fortress Monroe, when you were in the 411th."

Well, I had forgotten, to be sure, but the sight of the bit of oak did recall the time when I wore the blue, and was likewise very much in love with Mrs. Q., but then, she *wasn't* Mrs. Q. in those days.

PART I.

THE PLAN.

THE November sunlight from a Virginia sky streamed over the waters of Hampton Roads, and broke into a thousand glittering sparkles on the ripples in the wake of the transport propeller "Mersey," as she steamed from Fortress Monroe across the Roads towards the mouth of the Elizabeth River, away to the south. She was an "old tub," the "Mersey," and had long ago been broken up, but for the emergencies of venerable Uncle Sam, which gave her patriotic owners the

chance to fill their pockets by their country's needs, and to get for a single voyage thrice the value of the vessel's rotten hulk.

And so it came to pass, this bright November afternoon, that on deck, between decks, and below deck, she swarmed with a host of brass-buttoned heroes, crowded in, a battalion where there was scarcely room for a company, and bound

"They knew not where or why,
Theirs, but to go or die,"

as Drum Major Taps oracularly declared; but he added confidentially, to Private Buttplate that he'd "rather not be taken there in his coffin, before he was dead, if it was just the same to the gov'nment."

Down in the hold, where fresh air never came, and only a single ray of sunlight crawled down the hatchway at high noon, the rude bunks were built in interminable rows, filling all the space from side to side, and deck to deck, save the narrowest possible passage-ways. The parted waters "swished" and dashed against the frail sliding, through which the weakest convalescent could have "jabbed" his jackknife, and a stench worse than Baxter Street in midsummer, pervaded the whole dark dismal space, where, for weary weeks, hundreds of the four hundred and eleventh found their only lodging-place. No wonder, then, that the disgusted crew had, without dissent, rechristened the horrible craft the "Misery," in place of her proper name.

But on the upper deck, in the bright sunlight, amid the thousand changing views on land and water, all past and present discomforts for the moment were forgotten. We were a detachment of the four hundred and eleventh on the way to the ancient city of Norfolk, ordered thither to fill up the time, till the great "Slam-Bang Expedition" should be ready to sail for "distant service."

The next day was to be "Thanksgiving Day" in the old homesteads far away towards the north star, and many a blue-coated soldier felt "an aching void," as he thought of the turkey-bones not to be picked by him this year, and heaved a sigh from "below the belt," as he pensively gazed on his ration of hardtack and raw pork.

The grim walls and yawning embrasures of the fortress were fast fading into a stony-gray cloud, far in the rear; the sounds of pick and hammer on the low rocks of the Rip Raps had long since ceased; the Monitor

riding at anchor, by the fluttering bit of bunting at the masthead of the sunken Cumberland, had become a mere black speck in the distance, and already the sentries' bayonets on Sewall's Point were flashing back the sunlight in our faces, while just ahead was the wide reach of the Elizabeth River.

Away over towards the right, the low sandy shores and gunboats riding at anchor marked the mouth of the James, the barred highway to the heart of the Confederacy.

Colonel Purley sat on the quarter-deck, smoking an Old Point Comfort cigar, and contemplating the passing scenery. Very little of sentiment found place in the mind of our colonel, though his eyes rested on scenes then famous, and destined since to be still more famous in history.

Little cared he for Pocahontas and Powhatan, for Cornwallis, or bold John Smith, or even for the gallant crew of the Cumberland, though these were the shores on which the former gazed, as on those of a new-found Eldorado, and these the waters beneath whose surface the heroes sank to their long slumber amidst the thunder of the rebel guns.

Just now, the grizzly-jawed colonel was cogitating, between puffs, upon the prospects of the fall wool trade, and querying whether Sammy, Junior, would remember to "fix" the scales, whereon he was wont to weigh the wool for his honest farmer friends, in the old storehouse by the canal.

Now and then, he turned to Mr. Sly his adjutant, seated by his side, and gave vent to his burdened mind, and Mr. Sly, knowing as much of the workings of the wool trade as I do of the composition of country sausages, yielded an anxious assent to every proposition. But then Sly, to use a vulgar expression, "knew on which side his bread was buttered."

The vessel puffed and paddled on, up the narrowing channel of the river, the sinful games of "old sledge" and "euchre" on the forecabin went on unmolested, the scenery-gazers still strained their vision, and the colonel talked on to his staff, who was now blindly blundering in the beeswax business.

Suddenly all were brought to their feet by shouts of "The Merrimac!" "There she lies!" "Don't you see, close in shore?" And all eyes were turned towards the two stumpy posts projecting above the water, which old Barnacle, the mate, declared marked the resting-place of the famous rebel ram. The colonel pressed quickly to the rail, and gazed

with eager interest at the silent sentinel. A shrewd sly look crept into the corners of his sharp gray eyes, as he noted the position of the wreck, the shore and the tide. Sending Mr. Sly for old Barnacle, his new-formed scheme was carefully broached, and, at the old salt's suggestion, Private Tomplon and "Boston Bill," two brass-buttoned recruits from "old briny," were notified to report to the mate for duty that night. To Mr. Sly, who was proud to be so deep in his superior's confidence, he explained:

The people home had a rage for *relics*; the Merrimac was famous the world over—the wreck was easy of access—why should he stand in the way when the curiosity of so many thousands could be gratified if he should secure as much of the wreck as possible for relics, and perform a great public duty in distributing them throughout the land?

"Besides," and his gray eyes twinkled greedily, "there's *money* in it, Mr. Sly."

Mr. Sly assented again, this time with fullest appreciation, and the colonel was so delighted at the prospect, that he astonished his "staff" beyond expression by the gift of a cigar. Private Buttplate, who witnessed the gift, declared it was the first time "old Hunks" had been guilty of such a thing since he mounted his silver-leafed shoulder-straps; but then Buttplate was prejudiced. When the shadow of the old church tower had stretched across the narrow street and over the mossy headstones in the old graveyard where slept the dead of two centuries, and the last rays of the sun were kissing the flag at masthead, we tied up at the wharf of Norfolk.

PART TWO.

ITS EXECUTION.

It is not my purpose to attempt to describe all we discovered that was quaint, and strange, and old, in that oldest (with but one exception) of all American towns, for truth compels me to acknowledge that most of the members of the four hundred and eleventh luxuriated upon the generous bivalves retailed along the docks, in lieu of their lost turkeys, or lounged through the streets keeping a furtive lookout for the provost guard, all unmindful of antiquity's attractions.

As the afternoon of the day succeeding the arrival of the "Misery" wore on apace, Mr. Sly was notified that his presence was desired by his commandant in the after cabin.

Hastily swallowing the conic section of potato pie just purchased of a sable handmaiden "from Afric's burning strand," Mr. Sly tarried not for dalliance, but obeyed the summons.

"Mr. Sly," said the colonel, "I have concluded to give you an interest in the little scheme I suggested yesterday, and you will to-night in company with Barnacle, Bill and Tomplon, row down with the tide and endeavor to secure all the material you can. I have managed with our captain to box and store the spoil as 'equipments,' till we return to Fortress Monroe. Once shipped to Purleywich, 'Sammy' will have it manufactured into 'Merrimac canes,' and it will not be our fault if Purley and Sly don't make a good thing out of it. I'd be glad to go myself but for my rheumatism, and besides, sir, discipline must be maintained."

Now Mr. Sly had never before heard of the colonel's rheumatism, nor did he particularly fancy the idea of foundering and splashing around a sunken wreck, on a pitch dark night, within easy gunshot of the pickets on shore, for he was an eminently prudent man—the adjutant—and careful of his health.

But visions of greenbacks innumerable, and gold-headed canes by the gross, each bearing the legend, "Merrimac,"—"Purley and Sly," flashed before his mental gaze, and the pleasing prospect sufficed to prevail over his prudence. At midnight, then, while, though the soldiers slept, the hold resounded with snores, and groans, and gasps for air, a boat pushed out from under the bow of the Misery, as she headed down stream with the ebbing tide, and silently vanished in the darkness down the river.

What happened on that midnight ride, how Mr. Sly, bravely overcoming his conscientious scruples, took charge of the dark-lantern, how often he pressed the black bottle to his tremulous lips, how he hauled on the hawser, and tugged at the timbers, how, in the excess of his zeal, he tumbled overboard and would have gone to feed the little fishes but for the horny hand of old Barnacle clinched in his wavy auburn locks, and how at last, weary and wet, battered and bruised, he reached the vessel at the wharf just before the "drummer's call" for reveille, I cannot truthfully relate, for I did not see.

But rumor has a thousand tongues, and on this occasion one of them wagged between the jaws of "Boston Bill," to whom I would respectfully refer for further particulars.

The prize was secured and no one the

wiser, at least so thought the valorous adjutant, but alas! he was mistaken. He did not see that ubiquitous Private Buttplate, snugly stowed away in the shadow of the cabin hatchway, but Buttplate saw the boat come slowly up in the early morning twilight, saw the weary officer and boat's crew climb the sides, and carefully stow away their prize beneath a pile of canvas aft the pilot-house that had not been disturbed since the voyage began. Buttplate, though only a "miserable private," had sense enough to guess the meaning of this secret move, and wit enough to turn his knowledge to his own advantage.

At the mess-table that morning, Mr. Sly failed to appear, though previously noted for his unvarying promptness on such occasions. But Colonel Purley was unusually gracious, and even went so far in his beaming blandness as to inquire solicitously as to the state of the chaplain's health. As the colonel had heretofore made it a point never to recognize the Rev. O'Callaghan, except officially, his present cordiality was viewed with silent wonder by all the mess. Meantime, poor Sly shivered and shook in his narrow bunk with many a chill, despite the double doses of quinine liberally, nay, bountifully shovelled out on his "spatula" by the benevolent surgeon, till the poor "staff's" head rang with all the clamors of a dozen Birminghams. Presently his drooping spirits were revived by the simultaneous appearance of the colonel, and a cup of coffee.

"Is it all right, Mr. Sly?"

"All right, sir, under the canvas, on deck, sir."

"Very good, Mr. Sly, I'll see that you have the first vacant captaincy." And facing about, the puffy commandant strutted complacently away, intending to give the mate instructions to stow the "relics" in the lower hold, till they could be expressed to Sammy Junior. He mounted the cabin stairs and

stood on the deck. The vision of a hundred men, each with jackknife drawn, and hewing industriously at pieces of brown oak-wood, met his astonished gaze. A glimmer of the truth dawned upon his mind, and he madly rushed towards the canvas pile, but alas! the place that once knew it now knew it no more.

"Barnacle!"

Yes, Barnacle had seen the treasure unearthed, and had heard Buttplate reveal the nature of the discovered plunder, but was powerless to prevent it. I am sorry to say that the colonel used some very strong biblical expressions at this juncture, which I dare not venture to transcribe. With glaring eyes and bristling hair, he made a savage rush at Buttplate, who was standing by the bulwark, but the active boy was too quick for him, and grasping the ratlines, was out of reach in a moment far overhead, leaving the discomfited colonel below, half-choked with rage, and impotently shaking his fist. Turning again, he took a last despairing glance at his lost relics in the hands of the grinning soldiers, and then strode down the cabin stairs.

To the poor adjutant, cowering and shivering again in his bunk, shuddering under the stern and angry recriminations of his commander, the next ten minutes seemed as many months, despite the surgeon's Peruvian bark. How he was finally restored to favor, and won his double-barred straps, I know not, but for the next five days Private Buttplate wore ball and chain in the lowest depths of the hold, and was only released in time to desert before the great "Slam-Bang Expedition" sailed out between the Capes.

The last mail from the Fortress carried to a hundred northern homes as many rough-hewn relics of the Merrimac; but the gold-headed canes of "Purley and Sly" never found a market. And thus terminates this agitating tale.



THE CORMORANT'S LUCK.

BY W. H. MACY.

SEAMEN have the reputation, not altogether undeserved, of being more superstitious than the generality of mortals. Almost every one, however strong-minded and intelligent, cherishes away down in his mind a belief in "lucky" and "unlucky" ships. He may deny it ever so earnestly; may scout the imputation as sheer nonsense; but when brought to the test, the old feeling is very apt to come uppermost, and his actions to belie his bold words.

I well remember, in my boyish days, that there was always a rush of the best seamen to ship in the *Cormorant* as soon as her papers were known to be open. There were many more desirable ships, considering merely the intrinsic qualities of each; but the *Cormorant* had always been lucky, and it was generally believed always would be. There was a venerable battered horseshoe nailed to one of the breast-hooks in her bows, so as to revolve as on a pivot, and the crews who had sailed in her entertained a sort of veneration for this symbol. If unsuccessful in a chase of whales, they went into the fore-castle after their return

on board and turned the horseshoe on the nail a certain number of times; luck was sure to follow the next day, or, at least, very soon. Certain it was that the *Cormorant*, though an ancient ship, had never failed to make a successful voyage, and scarce any one had the temerity to suppose that she ever *could* fail.

My cousin, Joe Burrell, was several years my senior, and had arrived at that stage—only a question of time with all of us young islanders—when he was old and stout enough to go "round Cape Horn." His father, who had been an old salt himself, was a devout believer in luck, and had curbed Joe's impatience a whole year, having actually bespoken him a berth in the old *Cormorant* while yet she was at sea on her previous voyage. Nothing could exceed the boy's delight when he really saw his autograph signed on her shipping articles, though the "lay" against it was not so liberal as he might have obtained in other ships of less enviable reputation. The supply of stout lads to man the *Cormorant* was always greater than the demand, and the shrewd old Quaker owner

did not fail to profit a little by that fact.

Nathan Joy, her commander, had been mate of her on the previous voyage, and there was luck in him as well as the vessel. Surely no one ever began his career in the whaling business with a more flattering prospect of success than my cousin Joe. His letters to me were as frequent as his opportunities for sending them, and he always wrote in high spirits, giving such glowing descriptions of his adventures as fired my boyish ardor, and made me chafe with impatient longing for the time when I, too, should be deemed worthy to join the crusade against the leviathan.

A letter dated when the *Cormorant* was about two years out from home reported her near the Galapagos Islands, wanting only a few whales to fill her. As the letter was five months old when received, we began to look for Joe's arrival from the day of its reception. But months passed on, and winter set in without bringing either the ship or further tidings, until not even her proverbial good luck was proof against certain vague fears that some accident might have befallen her.

Every whaleship in those days carried a distinguishing signal, or "owner's flag," of large size, and it was customary, on arrival at Homes's Hole, or "Oldtown" (as we always called the little port of Edgartown), to send this flag by the little packet-sloop which plied between the Vineyard and Nantucket, thus reporting as early as possible the identity of the ship to the anxious ones on the lookout for her. Many a day we kept the spyglass in operation from the "walk" on the housetop, vainly watching for the great blue flag with a C in white, which was to set our minds at rest about the *Cormorant*. It came not, and even the most sanguine shook their heads, and admitted that the doctrine of luck had in this case proved a failure.

Then there drifted home a rumor that a certain whaleship, believed to be the *Cormorant*, had been cut off at Juan Fernandez by a party of Chilean convicts. What had been the fate of the crew could not be known, but it was almost sure that the pirates had kept possession of the vessel, and started off on some sort of marauding expedition in the Pacific. The penal settlement at the island had been broken up through the inefficiency of those placed in authority over the malefactors, and some

of the latter had been summarily shot, as Napoleon is said to have shot the Turks at Jaffa, as the easiest way of disposing of them. But those who had seized the ship had made good their escape, and it was long ere their whereabouts was known.

My uncle, Joe's father, still clung to his faith in the ultimate safety of the vessel and crew. "I tell you," said he, "there's luck in her old timbers, and she'll turn up somewhere yet all right." But spring came without any light being shed upon the mystery, and meanwhile I had grown stout enough to commence my own adventurous career, and cast my lot in the new ship *Samaria*, and prepared to fulfil what I had always been accustomed to look upon as my appointed destiny, quite undeterred by the lesson of my cousin Joe's fate.

We were nearly up with Cape Horn in the *Samaria*, hammering away against head winds, when a homeward-bounder, under a cloud of sail, came running down on our quarter. There were many marks of resemblance about her to the *Cormorant*; so said the old seamen, who ought to know, and when she rounded to within a short distance, and flaunted the blue flag with the C in white, for which we had watched so anxiously and so long, all doubt was removed. A few minutes later and my hand was seized with an iron grip by my cousin Joe Burnell, no longer a boy in stature, but a young Hercules.

Of course all sorts of eager questions were put, in our curiosity to learn the adventures of men who appeared as if risen from the dead; and the truth of their story, as I gathered it from Joe, was that the ship had been captured, as rumored, by a party of Chileans, who effected their purpose by surprise, boarding her while lying at Juan Fernandez in such force as to overpower the crew without striking a blow. Captain Joy, though not wanting in courage or in disposition to defend his property, found himself powerless, in consequence of the negligence of the watch in charge, and saw the impolicy of any attempt at resistance after the convicts were in full possession of the deck. They numbered full seventy men, and they offered no further violence, either to himself or his crew, than such as was necessary to make themselves safe in possession.

Joe told me he never was ill-treated by any of them during the whole time that he

was in their power; but he with the rest of his shipmates was confined below, constantly under guard, and only allowed to come out a few at a time, while the ship was put off with a free wind, running westward into the broad Pacific, her destination being, of course, quite unknown to her rightful owners.

The leader of the pirates was a Frenchman, who spoke fluently both Spanish and English, as well as his own tongue, and was evidently a man of no ordinary intelligence, and a competent navigator. For this reason the captain and officers knew no more of the position of the ship than what little they could gather by stealth, as they were not called upon to assist in shaping her course. Barreau the Frenchman was quite equal to the work he had undertaken, and maintained the most admirable discipline among his desperadoes. He never relaxed his vigilance in the guard over his American prisoners, while, at the same time, he allowed no one of his own followers to oppress or maltreat them. He had promised Captain Joy that they should all be landed at some civilized port, if he could approach the land so as to do so without compromising his own safety.

In due time the ship, making, as they judged, a general northwest course, arrived at an island supposed to be one of the Marquesan group, and came to anchor. Barreau would not suffer one of the Americans to land, but kept up the watch and guard over them with increased vigilance. The next day after the arrival he himself took a crew in one of the whaleboats, and pulled round a point out of sight from the ship. He was absent several hours, and on his return two heavy bags were lifted out of the boat, and carried below into his stateroom, being the same which Captain Joy had formerly occupied. Nothing was said openly about the contents of the bags, but it was whispered among the Chilians that they were filled with gold, and had been secreted at the island by Barreau on some former cruise.

Stores and provisions were taken on board, until the vessel was in a complete state of readiness for a voyage of any ordinary length. All this time the pirates had been kept strictly to their work, and been allowed no time for recreation or riot; but such humdrum life was not to be endured forever by men of this stamp. They in-

sisted upon having one grand carouse and jubilee before again putting to sea, and Barreau found himself obliged to yield. He made it conditional, however, that they should not leave the ship for that purpose, but should hold their revels on board. If his followers could be thrown off their guard while away from the vessel, there was the double danger of treachery from the savages and of a rising of the prisoners.

A renegade Englishman, who had taken up his abode on the island a year or two before, and become more than half barbarian, had established the manufacture of liquor from the "toddy" or sap of the cocoanut tree, a vile stuff, which may be warranted to kill at as many yards as any "tangle-foot" dispensed over the bar of the worst grogshop in New York or London. It was the first opportunity that the convicts had had to indulge in alcoholic stimulants, and they were not slow to buy up all the stock on hand from Cockney Ben, amounting to some dozens of bottles.

The revelry waxed loud and furious on the night previous to the day set for departure, and the desperadoes, having once given themselves up to it, appeared to have abandoned all thought of care or vigilance. The prisoners were allowed almost unlimited freedom, and were frequently invited to drink with their guards; but no more was taken by any of them than barely sufficient to avert suspicion, for the word had been quietly passed among themselves, and anxious eyes were watching the gradual progress of the drunken revel, which promised to open up a chance for striking a blow for freedom. It was a source of delight to them to observe that the master-spirit Barreau had little or no control of himself after he once began to drink. He was soon one of the most recklessly intoxicated of the party, and all discipline was at an end.

By midnight more than half of the Chilians were laid out, stupid from the effects of their grand carouse, while many of the rest were but little better. The Frenchman, after a maudlin attempt to show that he was still himself, which resulted in a signal failure, had retired below, and fallen in a stupor across the cabin table.

Now was the time for Captain Joy to recover easy possession of his vessel, and the signal was given for which his crew had been so eagerly waiting. By simultaneous action in different parts of the ship, a few

minutes sufficed to overpower the small number who were still capable of resistance; the rest were easily taken care of, and Captain Joy, with his own crew of twenty-four men, found himself once more in full command of his favorite *Cormorant*, but with seventy prisoners on his hands. It would never do to remain at their anchorage until daylight, as the natives might make an attack on seeing the new state of affairs, and the little party would be placed between two fires. Orders were given at once for lifting the anchor, and though the operation was performed as quietly as possible, it did not fail to attract attention from the shore. Canoes were soon seen approaching, but were ordered off out of range, and before the alarm had spread to all the savages the ship was a-weigh, and, with her topsails and jib drawing, moved slowly out of the bay. More canvas was added to catch the breeze, but the force detailed to guard so large a number of Chilians necessarily left the working party very short-handed. The prisoners must be got rid of, by some means, before they all recovered their sober senses, or it would be next to impossible to control so overwhelming a force.

As soon as an offing was gained the boats were lowered and filled with men, the most helpless ones being piled in with little regard to position or storage, and a few of the more sober men driven into each boat before she was cast adrift. So near the land they could not fail to reach it in safety, and their after fate among the barbarians must be their own affair. In this way about fifty were disposed of, including Barreau himself, who was still insensible. Except the few who had been wounded in the brief struggle for recapture no one was injured, and those few were retained among the twenty left on board, who were all placed in close confinement.

Thus relieved of the heaviest burden of care, our whalemens shaped their course for Valparaiso. As no observations could be taken for the two succeeding days, it was found difficult to determine exactly what island it was they had visited; for the pirates had kept no log, the navigation of the ship having been left in the hands of their leader, who, though he did his work well and understandingly, had left no written record of it. But that the island was one of that portion of the Marquesas known

as the Washington Group was pretty well determined. It was small, of coral formation, and thinly inhabited. Nothing definite was learned of the after history of the fifty men set adrift in the boats.

The *Cormorant* arrived off Valparaiso in due time, touching only long enough, however, to land the twenty desperadoes, for which the authorities did not appear to feel at all grateful, especially when it was learned that the Frenchman himself was not among them. There was no time for any questioning or investigation as to the contents of the mysterious bags, which still remained in the captain's stateroom. After leaving the place with a crackling breeze, bound up towards Cape Horn, the nature of their contents was first made known to the crew.

"Forty thousand dollars are in those two bags, all in gold," said Joe, as he finished his story, "and we all draw lays of it. The old man says it's part of the catchings of the voyage just as much as the oil."

Which there was no doubt it justly was; and thus it fell out that the *Cormorant*, with her cargo of spermaceti and the bags of yellow boys added, made the luckiest voyage of her whole career. She held her reputation until she was hauled up into the dock mud at the home-port and broken up, fairly dying of old age, as one might truly say. The horseshoe, much attenuated by corrosion, was religiously preserved, and nailed up in a similar position in the bows of her successor the *Novelty*, fresh from the shipyard. But, as if in very spite of the faithful believers, the *Novelty* was cast away on her first voyage, but a few months after leaving home, and the rusty emblem of good fortune was lost with her.

"Ah well," said my Uncle Burnell, then far advanced in years, "the bad luck was in her timbers, and not in the horseshoe. The *Cormorant* never ought to be allowed to die altogether; we might have kept a piece of the old keel to swear by, and built upon it. And it would ha' paid, too, better than building new ones, for, as long as she lived, her voyage was a sure thing, made before she sailed."

THE CROATIAN BRIDE.

BY FRANCES P. PEPPERELL.

ALL the world knows there were two Trencks, one the ideal of romance and darling of Germany, the heroic Frederick; the other, his cousin, as splendid in warlike manoeuvres and tactics as a modern Frank, but numbered among barbarians, and swarming with his savage Pandours, as fierce and brutal as the primal Hun, the Baron Francis Trenck. It is of the latter we shall speak.

An immense stature, a corresponding strength, great beauty of its kind, until marred by an accident, much accomplishment, the least part of which was the ability to speak seven different languages elegantly, an indomitable spirit, and a bravery that was frightful; all these are the elements of a hero, and of his bad qualities that fairly sank the scale, it may be unnecessary for us to speak. A year or two before that memorable epoch, when the Hungarian nobles too courageously took up arms for their empress, Queen Maria Theresa, Trenck promised her the submission of the Schlavonian banditti. No more formidable undertaking could have been devised, and no fitter person. These people, one might almost say this race, whose destruction was thus decreed, lived in the wildest mountains, with whose every path they were familiar, the vastest forests were as clear to them as an open field, they could shoot with an unerring aim, though the sabre was their choicer weapon, they swam like fish, and seemed, in fact, masters of every element but the air, flying being their only impossible feat. Add to this, their prodigious numbers, sufficient to be the pest of both Austria and Turkey, their fierce fortitude, and determined valor, and untiring revenge which forced them always to ravage the region where any of their leaders had been killed, the whole horde bound together by the most rigorous laws, and you have an enemy formidable enough for a much larger force than Trenck's regiment of two or three hundred mercenaries. But with Lucifer at their head, even sticks must burn, and so, what no army numbering its tens of thousands could have effected, the bold baron easily did with a handful; but you may be sure his men had no rest for the soles of their feet, and he himself was everywhere,

wild, and restless, and invisible as the conquering wind.

High up among these impassable hills towered a castle, imposing, not so much in itself as its situation; a few feeble fields stretching on the slope below, constituted its little manor, and it was owned by the Lord of Russdorf, an old warrior who, having met with much ill treatment at the hands of those who should have rewarded him, had retired to end his days in this small heritage, content indeed, if sometimes grumbling. Here he had married a young Croatian girl of no rank, who gave him for an only heir his little daughter, Violsé, at the time of our story, a maiden of sixteen. The Lady of Russdorf was, of course, the connection of a thousand people in this district, and her husband entertaining them with jovial hospitality, every dinner at his board resembled a gathering of the Schlavonic horde, and such, without more words, it was, although old Russdorf was innocent of any participation in their spoils, but liked their company, acknowledged their kinship, and was restored to his own soldierly youth by the excitement of their wild life of excursion and alarm. Each leader of the various tribes was styled a Haroun Bashaw, and these men, few in number, were very choice companions. Yet not unfrequently all his guests were absent, and the castle was lonely and cheerless as any mass of uninhabited rocks. Lonely and cheerless did I say? That was a great mistake. It was lighted by Violsé's youthful gayety and abundant beauty, in such profusion that the old Lord of Russdorf blessed his fortunate stars that had subjected him to injustice, to find, afterwards, his reward in fireside happiness, and borrow joy from the overflowing life and variety of this girl, more lovely than one could guess, and more sweet than any that her father knew. Violsé's name was given her because a little Croatian boy, playing finely on his violin, stopped one night in the castle when she was a babe, and so won the child's heart with his music, that she would not suffer him to go for weeks, when at last he departed, and they did not know if any one had ever seen him since. Any

one who has travelled in the southeastern portion of Austria and has seen the mountain girls there, would not believe any description of Violsé's beauty an exaggeration. Large eyes, purple with blackness, yet veiled by blacker lashes; delicate features; sparkling teeth; and cheeks as finely tinged with scarlet as if red leaves had been crushed on their olive surface to stain it with clear juice; hair whose redundant masses were coiled and pinned with silver bars; and a slender figure that swayed with every breath, so fragile did it appear, but was nerved with an elastic vigor that fitted it for all wild hill-scrambles; these were the most striking points of Violsé's appearance, but her winning manner, her sweet smile with its twin dimples, her ringing laugh—all these you must wait a while to see, and a little longer to find a courage, said by certain aspersers to be rare among women, and a fertility of invention and patience under suffering that, combined, made her mistress of the life she was destined to lead, and the idol of a score of the young Croatian robbers, who each saw in her the very thing that charmed him. Of course this did not please the Lord of Russdorf, who, with an hereditary characteristic, preferred his daughter should espouse noble blood; but it was pleasant enough to his wife to know her child would be happier here than in any courtlier region, and determined that among the vigorous Croats, the bravest and best should wed the heiress of Russdorf. But of this to her husband she prudently said nothing.

It happened that one year the spring came early; already the flocks were out on green pastures with their shepherds, and on the 28th of April a knot of Croatian maidens, with their brothers and fathers, were in the great hall of the castle with the lord and lady, and having supped, were making merriment. Nights being always cool there, a great fire roared up the chimney, and they were talking over the May festivals to come off in four days. "The Baron Trenck gives a great banquet too, down in his fortress," said one.

"Who has seen the baron, ever?" queried Russdorf.

"Why," answered the first speaker, "I was at his house once, but he was not there."

"And I met him once in the dark, so, though we spoke, we saw nothing," said another.

"What did he say?"

"Say? O, just asked the road, his voice like thunder, hoarse and loud."

"Pshaw! then he don't know our roads?" asked Violsé.

"Not he?" Here the doors, which had been opening and shutting on one and another, admitted a new guest, who made his compliments to the company. "Not he," resumed the speaker; "the first mist that falls would set him adrift. Would it not, Haroun Bashaw Marien?"

"A mist?" answered the person thus addressed, a slender, handsome youth, though having attained the dignity of his title, the last comer. "A mist send Francis Trenck adrift? Not one nor twenty?"

"Well said, Marien," answered the Lord of Russdorf. "We are asking who has ever seen Trenck."

"Very few, my lord."

"Thou hast never?" asked Russdorf.

"O," said the former speaker, "no one has!"

"But I know whom Trenck has seen," answered the youth, as if the question asked were too idle to deserve reply. "And mayhap all men who have daughters should know too."

Here a low rattling of sabres in scabbards announced what reception the baron would find from those who had daughters, and just then the great door opened and shut again, admitting a wandering musician, who, taking his instrument in hand, bowed before the ladies Russdorf, and seated himself at the fire.

"We have not congratulated thee, Marien, on thy new honor," said the Lady of Russdorf, continuing the conversation. "Thou hast not been here since. A Haroun Bashaw at twenty! It is unheard of."

"But well merited," said the tall fiddler, from his seat, for no one in such hospitality waited for introduction. "Every one knows the valor of Marien Sohntag."

Every one knew it indeed, but it did not follow that the unknown musician knew it, at all, for young Marien Sohntag had come down some mountain peak, and to a range of lesser hills, no one asking him any questions, to join in this guerilla warfare, only a year ago.

"How long hast thou fought, Haroun Bashaw?" asked he.

"More time or less," carelessly replied Marien.

"Hast ever fought with Trenck?" asked one.

"One must see a man before he fights him," he replied. "And thou saidst no one had."

"But *hast* thou ever?" whispered Violsé, by his side.

"No, but I will," he responded, and moved towards the fire.

"Thou'st a brave viol there," he said, to the musician.

"Yes, yes," answered the stranger, with a laugh. "And where's the Croat's not fond of dancing?"

"Where, indeed?" asked Marien, with a flash in his bright eye. "Yet sometimes we make our enemies dance, you know. But what if now thou shouldst play instead?"

The musician looked at him a moment, then shouldered his violin and drew one long piercing note. Instantly the circles were broken up, a dozen claimants besought Violsé's hand, but she said, "I dance with Marien first." And they all took others. Nevertheless Marien had not asked her. But when he turned from the stranger, she met him, took his hand, and as the first notes of the melody came blundering out, swung round in the national custom and opened the dance. It was poorly enough played, by the way, and strange work they made of that waltz. Here the music was false, there fast, now slow, again indistinct and confused, till the dancers hit each other right and left, got entangled in all directions, tumbled, and heated, and angry, all because of the unskillful playing. When the movement subsided, he led Violsé back and stood with her before the player. "Thou'rt not expert enough," said he, in a low tone, "that it should seem thy trade! Here, take thou my partner, and I'll play the round for thee, Trenck."

The stranger rose, at first like a rill of smoke from some lowland cottage, then higher, and even higher, till his gigantic height towering aloft, overtopped the whole assembly. With no words he handed Marien his violin. "Canst thou play?" asked Violsé, in surprise. He smiled, answered nothing, but caressed the instrument as if it had life. Then the late player made a reverence before the lady, fit for the empress, raised her hand to his bearded lips courteously, and led her out. No one had heard what passed, all were amazed, and expected worse confusion from the change, for what should a wild warrior know of music? But slowly, like the first breath of a zephyr, stole for-

ward a low delicious melody, swelling with rapid variations and long curves of sound, till chords of rhythm resounded with orchestral force through the hall and filled it with ravishing music. The dancers paused in their easy swaying, seeming attracted toward him, then repelled; now faster and faster he drew their mazy circles, then suffered them to lose the swift course in the gentle languor of his tune, and finally ceased, master of them and their motions, as they all clustered around him. "Marien! Marien!" they cried, "art thou a wizard? Hast called the wind from the clouds? Dost thou play for the witches on the Brocken?"

"Not at all," laughed Marien, "the witches play for me."

"See, friend," murmured the tall stranger, "I bring thee back thy lady. One reason of mine in coming hither was to kill thee. Well, thou hast talked so divinely to my poor little box that I forgive thee!"

"Thou forgivest me?" responded Sohntag, in the same key, but with a threat in his tone. "Who art thou, to forgive? Haroun Baskaw of any tribe, or just a Colonel of Pandours in the plains below? Have a care, Colonel Trenck! I am the one to forgive here!"

"Thou? Draw, then, and try!"

"Hush! Hush, man! Here are fifty to thy one. No noise, an' it please thee, nor bloodshed before ladies. Come without and we'll cross swords there."

"So that thou canst summon all thy horde and make short work of me?" sneered the other.

"Truly thou mightst think so. Take my word, then. No one shall know of thee; thou'rt as safe there as in the streets of Vienna."

"Well, well. I've the mind to try. Hearken! I do not know the way home; tell thy friends thou wilt show me. So we go. Make any little arrangement, friend; thou wilt not live to come back!"

Therewith they went out laughing. Across the courtyard and gates, across the moat, the sloping fields, till they reached a defile, open on one side to the moon that splintered all her beams upon the peaks; here Marien having led his strange companion, beguiling the way with friendliest talk, paused, fronted his adversary, bowed, and drew his sabre.

"Well, little youth," said Trenck, I've half a mind not to slay thee, thou innocent! It's but a ruse; I know the way well enough. Go home safe."

"Thank you kindly, sir," replied the youth, "when we have measured swords."

"Tush, boy, I—"

"Must I make the attack? One, two, three!"

Their sabres crossed, a shower of sparks shot like a fiery cloud into mid air, showing that, slender as was the "boy's" arm, a nervous strength supplied it not inferiorly to the gigantic limb that rose and fell ponderously beside it.

"Well done for a boy!" cried Trenck.

"Have done with thy insolence!" retorted his adversary, as they rested a breathing space. "Thou'st a handsome face, man, but a sabre scratch would interfere with its grace." "Canst thou reach so high?" laughed Trenck.

"Thou hast the advantage in two inches only, thou braggart. All men are not May-poles."

"Though they hope to obtain May-queens, eh? Well, as I said before, try!"

"I never aimed so high as a man's face but once. His heart is high enough for me. But once; thy Lieutenant Schwartz has no nose, Trenck."

"Was it thou? O, thou rascal! was it thou? Come! I will not leave a bone in thy body!" exclaimed Trenck, furiously.

"Well, as thou saidst before, try!"

So far, Trenck had dissembled, hoping to weary his antagonist, and waiting for a pretext to come down on him in wrath. Now like an avalanche he flew upon him with a fierce swiftness and weight that might have shivered him to atoms, but with agile grace Marien had slipped aside, and while his own weapon wounded the wrist of his opponent, Trenck's broke upon the stubborn rock and fell to the ground. Maddened, he seized pistols hidden beneath his sash, but the wary swordsman knocked them up, one exploding in mid air, the other spinning over the rock and falling like a pebble into the abyss below.

"For the first time in thy life, Trenck, thou art disarmed. May it be the last!" said Marien. And so, with a mocking wave of his hand, bounded up the cliff and joined one whom, early in the contest, he had seen sitting there and watching.

"Well, go!" said Trenck, after him. "Thou'rt a generous youth. I came, too, to ask Russdorf, for his maid-to-wife. But, as I owe thee somewhat now, since I being swordless, thou mightst have put an end to

me, take *thou* her, and may she prove no termagant!" So saying, Trenck plunged down the defile, and his great voice was heard shouting a rude stave hundreds of feet below, as weaponless, in a hostile country, he resought his home.

"Violse!" exclaimed Marien, as he gained her side, "how camest thou? how darest thou?"

Perhaps this was different from what the maiden, who had heard Trenck's parting salutation, expected, for there was a certain sternness in his tone which, whether unaffected or assumed to hide deep emotion, had never been heard there before. She reddened in the moonlight, and answered, facing him:

"Thou'rt quarrelsome, indeed! How dared I? What dare I not? and why should I not dare?"

"Thou mightst have stayed for asking. When two go out alone, if they wish followers they say so."

"But I was not asked, you see, and should not have been, and so should have lost a view of this famous and bloodless encounter, of which mad Harold shall make us a song, a death struggle where no damage was done and both came off scot-free!"

"Not so," answered Marien, with his hand on his side, while his face was in shadow that she might not see the look of pain now and then contracting it. But love has quick eyes; in an instant she saw the blood that had already oozed through his fingers, as he toiled up the rock to her, and snatching away his hand, beheld a long cut in his clothes, from whence welled this warm torrent. Without speaking, she tore off her scarf and bound it tightly above the wound. In those days, all women were educated to a certain degree of surgery, more infallibly than now to make broth or gruel, so it took Violse no long time to bind his cut up sufficiently till they should reach the castle and a more competent leech. As she tied the last knot and adjusted a kind of tourniquet, "Well, Violse, wouldst thou have done it for Trenck?" he questioned.

"As soon as for thee!" she retorted, angrily, not having forgotten the words passed a moment before.

Quickly as light flashed, he tore the bandage, broke the scarf and its knots, suffered the blood to gush from his side again. "Go, thou false girl!" he cried. "I being no dearer than the Pandour, never shall thy hand soothe the pain of mine!"

Perhaps she would have suffered him to pass, as he dashed boldly down from her, still clasping his hand on his side, but ere a dozen bounds he staggered and sank exhausted by the loss of blood. Immediately she was beside him again, essaying once more to bind the gash. "No, no," he repeated, faintly, while the moonbeams, shining in his white face and kindling the great blue eyes to keen fire, glanced off and played in the streaming ringlets of gold that rolled out as the cap fell from his head, but before he could murmur more, the lids fell, something like death settled on the pallid brow; he had fainted. Violsé mechanically repaired the bandages, then brought water and endeavored to awake him. He seemed to be only in a sweet dream, from which he started at last, wide-eyed and bewildered. "O, it is a dream," he said, then; "Violsé is not—" Here he saw her, and became silent.

"Yes, I am here," she said. "Keep thy hand from thy bandage, or I will call those who can make thee! Then it will be well known that thou art no longer invulnerable, as thy silly followers believe."

"No," said he, "I am not invulnerable. And thy words are swords."

"Why should I care?" she answered, half-aside, "when thou art so indifferent to the pain thou causest me?"

"Have I ever caused thee pain, ever?" he asked, as if it rejoiced him. "Violsé, I ask of you what no one else might give me—forgiveness."

"Canst thou rise?" she said, not noticing his last words. "Come then, thou canst enter with me unobserved. Thou'lt find linen and salves in thy usual room, and my mother herself shall medicate thy heart; thou needst not rejoin the rabble, but sleep quietly, and by the morrow who may be the wiser?"

Here she took his hand to lead him down, but he forcibly withdrew, and planting himself against the rock with folded arms, he surveyed her till her lids fell, her color deepened, the smile came and settled in the fine corners of her mouth.

"Well?" he said.

"Well?"

"Violsé, wilt thou torture me all my life long?"

"That depends."

"Wilt thou never answer me?"

"Answer what?"

"Answer if thou lovest me."

"How should I answer what was never asked?"

He made a quick movement. "Answer then, now, cruel girl! I ask if thou lovest me?"

"What if I do?"

"As well die by the sword as the famine?" he cried, snatching the end of the scarf that protected his wound. She sprang forward and thrust his hand away, then half withdrew, hesitated an instant, and raised her eyes suddenly.

"Thou art not generous?" she cried. "I will never tell thee I love thee, that thou mayst bandy my words about with thy mates! Thou! who hast never said thou lovest me?"

But the next instant, stung by a consciousness of injustice, she turned, lifted both arms to his shoulders and laid her head between them, all as quickly as if she feared some flash of shame and pride would annihilate her before she could breathe again. Half doubtingly, his arms closed round her, drew her in to his throbbing heart, held her with a pressure that death could hardly have disannulled. A breathing space; then all blushing and ashamed, she stood apart, only to be drawn with long kisses into that silent embrace again. At last she placed herself beside him for a staff, and without a word those silent lovers sought and gained the castle. The love of a Croat—it is a proverb—passes all comprehension, and his hate all vengeance.

The next morning the same guests were breakfasting with the Lord of Russdorf, when again Marien Sohntag entered, and from the color in his tanned cheek, the glow in his eyes, and the dress artfully concealing all sign, one would sooner have dreamed the sky to be rent than his side. By-and-by the conversation grew loud and hearty, having received an impetus from his presence, for every Croat adored his young chief, and rigorous as were the laws which he had power to enforce over his Schlarvonic followers, every one lived familiarly and pleasantly with him. Soon scouts and messengers followed one another into the great hall, each giving him some meaning message, and then either joining the company or retiring on new errands. At length this portion of business was concluded. "I was prevented from mentioning last night, when we spoke of Trenck," then said Marien, quietly, "a piece of news that concerns us all. I have seen

the stipulation signed by Francis Trenck, in which he promises to deliver the whole horde of Slavonic *banditti*, as he chooses to term us, dead or alive, to Maria Theresa."

"Marien! Is it so?" cried a dozen black-bearded giants, springing to their feet. "Has he sworn that? Trenck dares much, but Trenck dares not that!"

"That, and much more."

"Thou art not deceived?"

"I am not deceived, my good lord. If you all wish for more, let me say it was a week yesterday since, in Vienna, in the audience chamber of the empress, I heard him swear to exterminate us."

"Thou, Marien! Thou in the empress's audience chamber, thou in Vienna, man! Thou hadst been safer in the fire!" resounded a chorus.

"I in Vienna! Where should a Haroun Bashaw be but looking after the interest of his people?"

"And so," said Violsé, "he will exterminate us?"

"Us?" asked Russdorf. "Art thou one, Violsé?"

"Henceforth, my father."

"Little maid, be cautious. The young Count Zwingel will never marry thee if thou art heard thus speaking."

"That will be not! No, indeed, nor do I wish he should," she replied, with a mischievous laugh. "He will never marry me!"

"What! Thou wilt break a contract?"

"I have never made a contract. If thou hast, thou must fulfil it, and I don't see how thou canst marry him. And I could not for thee, should mamma be exterminated, for she is a Croat."

"Exterminate us?" cried Marien, echoing his own words. "We who have levied tribute on five nations? Before God, never!"

"See, mamma is picking up the violin the tall fiddler left last night," continued Violsé. "But we had rare music!"

"What draws thy gaze so? what dost thou find on the instrument?" asked the Lord of Russdorf, approaching his wife, as she stooped. The lady answered nothing, lifted the violin to his eyes, where was rudely carved in the wood the one ominous word, **TRENCK**. A smothered sound, that but for the presence of their leader would have been a yell, echoed through the place, while they clustered round the sign of this late presence.

"It was he, then, last night? Trenck among us and unpunished?" cried one.

"Who knew it? Thou, Marien! Thou wast out with him! Thou—"

"Have a care, Schultzt!" said Marien. "What would ye have had me do? Yes, I knew it. But do Croats betray? Or is hospitality sacred?"

"Yet if ye wish to know," interrupted Violsé, "when they went out, it was to fight on the Steinberg, and if thou findest blood there, it is Trenck's blood; Trenck's, who will carry his arm in a sling for a month!"

"And thou, Marien; wert thou wounded also?" cried Schultzt.

"Do I carry the marks about me?" laughed Marien. "I seem like one wounded to death? Trenck and I parted in good faith, yet if we meet again, it will cost one of us dear."

"And why was he here?" asked Russdorf.

"My good lord, to find in what league you might be with traitors. But we are ready for him now. I do not know a defile or a hill that has not its defenders. All is in readiness. We number the sands of the desert, and though Trenck pour out our blood like water, and send a soul to God each hour of his life, he cannot live long enough to fulfil his threat!" And here Marien, taking the violin, whispered from it a low melody.

Suddenly a loud trumpet blast from the valley below rose and filled the air.

"It is Trenck's," said the Lady of Russdorf, as she looked from the narrow window.

"Men, to your posts!" said their leader, quietly, as if he bade them a light adieu. And in a second more there remained in the room only the Russdorfs and himself, while he still drew the long bow downward in a sigh of sound.

"Marien," said the Lady of Russdorf, "when didst thou learn music?"

"Before I learned speech, my lady."

"Thou hast always played then?"

"Since and before a certain day when I wandered down the hills and played the Leunsden Lied at your gate, sixteen years ago."

"Yes, Marien," said Violsé, "I always felt it was thou."

"And where didst thou go when thou left us?"

"Up hill and down dale, my lord, like any little vagabond child. In one place and another, no roof but the rock, no bed but the moss, till the mountains knew me for their lover, and these wild tribes claimed me for their master."

"And have you no home now?" asked the lady.

"Yes," he replied, after a moment's hesitation; "higher than this, in perfectly inaccessible fastnesses, is a tower that would defy all Europe. That is mine, and always was, and my father's before me. There my chosen people meet, some few score who alone of our myriads know of it, and there I have a nest for her who may become my wife. Russdorf, I request of thee thy daughter."

It was a dangerous thing to refuse a favor to a Haroun Bashlaw, yet the lord had determined, as we have said, that his daughter's husband should come of the old Austrian stock; and to marry a Croat was in his eyes almost a degradation, although he had taken for his own maxim on a similar occasion that the wife takes the husband's rank; so while the Croatian girl whom he wedded became an Austrian noblewoman, this Croatian youth, should Violse wed him, would drag his daughter to his own level.

"No, no, Marien," said he; "I respect, I admire thee, chief, but my daughter must wed nearer home."

"Russdorf, will she be any happier?" pleaded his lady.

Meanwhile Violse stood silent, though resolved.

"Happy? The wife of a Croat?"

Marien's eyes sparkled with anger.

"But I am not a Croat!" he said, controlling himself.

"What then art thou, Marien?" asked the old lord, soothingly.

"My fathers were kings of Albania," replied the youth, proudly, "and but that it is a barren title with no revenue, yielding not half the joy of my mountain life, I also should be; yet the heir to this crown, profitless as it is, cannot shake it off, and his wife will be queen of Albania."

"Marien," said Violse, "I do not desire to be queen of Albania. I never knew about you before; I wish only to be your quiet wife, my mountaineer, and that I will be, if all the world say nay." And she clung to him tenderly, without daring to look up at her father. Marien held her closely, and bowed gayly to the astonished father.

"Shall I bear her off like the prize of an eagle, Russdorf? Or wilt thou give her to me calmly?" he said.

"Why, why," exclaimed the other, confused and bewildered, "if the lassie wishes—if—faith, then, Marien Sohn'tag, thou'st

served me a shabby trick! Wait, lad, wait, is my advice. Maybe I'll give her, and maybe I won't. See how to-day's hunt with Trenck goes on, and come hither again May-day. Then, if I have determined on it; thou mayst marry. Thou canst not ask any more."

"No more, indeed. Thou givest me better than a kingdom," he replied. Then kissing the Lady of Russdorf's hand, he gently released her daughter from his clasp and was gone, while nearer and repeated trumpet-blasts were pealing through the airy region.

These trumpets were, by no means, all Trenck's, as a loud announcement in the courtyard below soon signified. For directly afterwards, Count Zwingel's name was banded among the servants, and immediately he himself, an amiable seeming person, appeared in the hall, and it was soon evident on what errand.

"See, now," muttered Russdorf to him. "Here's a pretty business! Come for the lussy just as she's promised herself to somebody else. But she's not promised by me, rely on that! Her mother and herself have taken it into their heads to choose another lover—you were so long coming, Herr count—say they never made the contract. Now, Zwingel, I'll just stand aside, and the one that can get her may keep her."

The count who had come, never suspecting but that everything was going on smoothly as heart could desire, was rather amazed at this proposition, and perhaps would have signed off in hostility, had not Violse, who had left the room to see to the comfort of the young maidens, her guests, at that instant returned, the color aroused by the late scene still burning in her cheek and flashing in her eye, and all her beauty more brilliant than ever he had heard it described. The count decided to remain. In an hour a plan was agreed upon between the old Lord of Russdorf and young Count Zwingel, which should give Violse to the latter's possession in less time than the four days at whose close Marien was to return for his sentence. Meanwhile Russdorf disposed the count's retinue, announced his business to Violse, chucked his wife's chin in eminent good humor, for he was sure of having his own way, and sat down to amuse his guest with games and stories, and eating and drinking, till this villanous disturbance of Trenck and the banditti should be concluded, and they could sally forth for a boar hunt; so that day and three others passed, and the next that came would

be Mayday, if they all lived to see it. Violsé had not once spoken to the count; her mother had been merely civil as hospitality required. The young girl watched him gaming with her father, and liked him more for the keen interest and cunning skill he displayed at hazard. She watched him playing with the hounds in the hall, and detected the tyrant in his treatment of the fawning animals; she watched the little leer that twisted his face at the Haroun Bashaw's accidental mention, hated him for his absurd contempt, and only wished that he were himself a Schlavonian, and that Trenck might get afool of him. Perhaps that which operated less favorably for Zwingel was his ill looks; no woman ever forgives that; but, on the other hand, Violsé's admiration for courage and strength might have found sufficient satisfaction in those undoubted attributes of the count to compensate for any lack of comeliness.

Meanwhile the fight was everywhere ringing through the valleys. Each party claimed that the other fell like grain before the reaper; yet neither, to these not indifferent observers at Russdorf Castle, appeared to gain any advantage. It was the night before Mayday, and during this time nothing had been seen of Marien. Now and then a fierce war-cry had come pealing up from the distant hollows, and they knew he charged with his van; but neither side sounded trumpets of victory till the whole campaign should be concluded. Often a bold rider dashed from cliff to cliff, where many a footman would scarcely have dared to creep; and often, too, in clear dark midnight, for the moon was in her last quarter now, the far-away silver shiver of a violin drew all the air into harmony with its sweetness. Then Violsé knew that Marien was yet safe, for none but he knew the magic strains which spoke to her what no words could tell.

Again the Russdorfs were seated round their great fire of blazing logs in the hall. Servants were coming and going with sweetmeats and wines, and here and there a mountaineer dropped in with a little scrap of news from the conflicts, eagerly gleaned by a score of hungry listeners. The young Zwingel sat on one side of the fire, teasing a great mastiff, till bristling, it showed its teeth and gave him a shrewd warning. A Haroun Bashaw of another tribe had entered, and strolling round to accost one and another, had finally paused beside Violsé.

"Dost thou know one Marien Sohntag?" he murmured.

"Do I know him?" repeated Violsé.

"Ah, ah, I see thou dost. He bade me give thee this." And the chieftain dropped in her hand a little eastern cross of sapphires and diamonds, the only relic of Sohntag's ancestral splendor, and which he had promised Violsé to send her for token if he were ever in any danger where she could assist him. She took it reluctantly, as if the movement hurt her, then shut her hand tightly over it, as a martyr might over a red-hot iron.

"He is captured?" she asked, between her teeth.

"He is so, lady. We had cleared the field, Trenck had vanished, the day was ours. We planted a spear for signal of another victory. We have fought four days, and there are four spears planted; so thou seest we have gained all!"

"Yes; but Marien—the Haroun Bashaw?"

"I was about telling thee. As I said, when Trenck's last coward made off, Sohntag dismissed his followers, and he and I stood on the hither side of Bergen's Height planning the morrow's work. When it was settled, I rode down the hillside and left him standing alone, for his horse had been killed under him; his men were within call, so I thought of no danger. His sword and spear had been broken in the fray; he had nothing but his pistols; in an instant I heard their report. I turned, and two of those immense Pandours lay dead on the rock before him, while making out of a fissure, Trenck and four others seized him. I spurred back, but too late; my death-stroke fell on one alone; but Marien, while dashing by in their arms, threw me this bauble, for thee, he shouted. Perchance thou knowest why."

"He must have heard them say where they meant to put him," said Violsé. "If he were ever shut in the Steinberg cave—"

"Steinberg cave? Is there such a place?"

"Thou shalt hear. Were he imprisoned there, I should receive this, he said."

"And why?"

"Trenck fancies that he himself discovered the Steinberg cave, that no one knows its existence; and vaunted in Vienna that he would yet shut the Haroun Bashaw in there to starve!"

"He vaunted!"

"Well he might. They are all ignorant of the place, except now yourself."

"True. I have never heard of it."

"Often enough have I promised Sohntag to teach him its windings. I must hasten now, for should his people—"

"Yes, should the commons discover that he were there, they would lose faith in his invulnerability, which never must be. How didst thou learn this secret cave?"

"One day, before war was declared, I sat on the Steinberg, when I saw Trenck prowling round alone, but armed to the teeth. In his way, he loosened a bit of rock that crumbled under his heel, sent him slipping, and he fell where brushwood, and vines, and slates gave way—fell out of sight. I ran forward, and looking down the cavity, saw that he had fallen some eight feet on a bed of moss, and into a vast cavern. He picked himself up and explored it some way, but found no other outlet, then returned while I hid myself, and went his way; whereupon I explored it myself, found another outlet, nay, several, and if Marien-Sohntag is in this place, it is only bound hand and foot, with sentinels at the first entrance."

"Exactly. And what wilt thou do, lady?"

"I will bring him to thee at midnight. Dost thou know the plain below the Bergen's Height? Ay? Hast thou nor thy scouts seen it to-day? No? The whole of Trenck's regiment of Pandours are encamped there to-night. They did not pitch their tents till twilight; I saw them then. Go thou and gather the Croats, as many as autumn leaves; I will bring thee their leader when thou hearest the castle clock toll twelve."

Herewith Vielse left the chieftain and mingled with the others.

"To-morrow is Mayday," said one. "Who is queen?"

"Thou rememberest an old saying of the gipseys, Russdorf, that the Mayday whose queen was a bride, should bring peace and prosperity to the Croats?"

"By my fay! I remember it well, and I wish well to fulfil it! Here is my Vielse chosen queen, and assents; and chosen bride, and dissents."

"Not so fast," said Vielse. "I never said I dissented."

"What, what, what, lassie!" cried he. "Hast thou yielded at length?"

"Nay," said Vielse, and "yea," said her mother. "Our Vielse shall be a bride to-morrow, if ever any day makes her one."

"Well said, my fair ones!" cried Russdorf,

pouring out a brimming beaker in congratulation of Zwingel, who himself looked at the ceiling and looked at the floor, and could not believe his ears. In a few seconds he moved and stood opposite Vielse.

"I thank thee, sweet one," said he.

"You thank me, for what, pray?"

"That thou hast at last crowned my suit with success."

"You have never made any suit to me, and I have never given any assent to you. It is not your bride that I shall be to-morrow."

The Count Zwingel fell from the skies. He moved hastily away to acquaint Russdorf with this new phase of affairs, and Vielse availed herself of the opportunity to slip from the company. Nevertheless, the count determined that he was not to be outwitted; now was the time for action; he concerted his plans and then followed her. But of course it was a vain quest that a stranger made in these regions for a girl who knew their least turn, and was "lighter-footed than the fox."

Vielse took a little basket on her arm, containing wine and meats, and quickly threaded the lonely paths to the Steinberg. Here and there a torch flashing behind a towering rock, a low bugle-note stealing through a defile, the sparkle of a distant forge fire, told that the summoners and armorers were not idle; but all these did not disturb Vielse; they were her friends.

"I did not bring the handsome rascal back to tent with us," Trenck had said to his own comrades, "for these Croats have more tricks than a cat has lives; he would infallibly have escaped. So I hid him in a nice place of my own, that nobody in creation, but the Lord and I, knows of."

The colonel little knew that at that very moment a little mountain girl was stripping his campaign of all its glory. Vielse paused on the brink of a precipice that to ordinary eyes would have appeared enormous and frightful; but she made no more of swinging herself from ledge to ledge than if descending the castle staircase, till she stood on the limit of the foaming torrent that dashed below. There she parted a mass of wet leaves and thorny boughs, plunged into the opening thus made, and threaded her way, for a moment, in complete darkness. Two fiery eyes glowing on her from a covert she passed without heeding, knowing what a chasm yawned between her and the beast that

owned them. After a few steps she lit her torch, and then ran lightly but silently on, wading through little brooks, climbing and descending, till she reached a place more like a platform; here, crawling on her hands and knees, she insinuated herself under what had appeared to Trenck an impassable barrier wall. She set her torch in a crevice and cautiously advanced to the prostrate form of Marien, who, relying on her, slept as sweetly as if in his own tower on the topmost crag of Givornus. She stooped, and with a stout clasp-knife cut into inch bits every cord that bound him; then sat at his side a few moments till he turned uneasily in his slumber and murmured "Violse."

"She is here," said Violse, in so clear and sweet a tone that he opened his eyes without surprise. The torch, flickering against the stalactites, dazzled him, he turned them to Violse; then instinctively, as if sure she could not be there without having loosened his bonds, he rose to his feet and clasped her in an embrace whose tenderness only absence and danger had enhanced. After an interval of silence, Violse playfully disengaged herself, and gayly sat down with her lover to the repast she had brought, and over which she related all that had lately transpired, together with the last words she had exchanged with Zwingel.

This was a new trouble for the young Haroun Bashaw; he was not aware that Zwingel had yet come upon the scene. The affair between the Croats and Pandours would have been settled to-morrow, he said, but for his unlucky capture to-day; and he would cut this Gordian knot by keeping Violse beside him until the end of the next day's conflict.

"A battle Mayday!" said she. "Wilt thou destroy all our traditions, Marien? Thy battle will be fought to-night." And she added her orders and arrangements already given for that purpose.

"Well done for a soldier's wife!" he applauded. "But then at least thou wilt let me place thee in security till daylight? And then, when thou art crowned queen, thou wilt also be crowned bride?"

"No, no," she replied, a little proud to show him that she could take care of herself. "I should be a poor soldier's wife if I needed to be cared for like a blossom. I will watch thy peril from the Bergen's Height; if thou fallest, I, too, will descend and die with thee; if thou conquerest, come thou and take me!"

By this time, having pursued their way, they had emerged from the cavern, had crossed the torrent, Marien bearing her in his arms while he forded it on the slippery stones, and were ascending the height of which she spoke. Here they paused, and in the blue starlit darkness looked downward. Below them lay stretched the tents of the Pandours, sentinel-torches burning faintly, and all the strong-limbed wretches, worn out with strife, bound in an iron sleep. Marien turned from the survey, again pressed Violse to his bosom, burned his kiss upon her lips, and left her. Certainly a half hour had not elapsed before one clear prolonged trumpet-peal burst from every quarter of the encircling mountains, echoed and rose, and fell and rose again, till its ringing notes woke every fissure of the answering rocks, and like a living hurricane, from all sides, headlong riders bore down upon the Austrian regiment in that famous charge that gave the Croats Croatia free from Pandours. But what succeeded that glorious instant of charge, and shout, and clashing arms, was not for Violse to know; a grasp of iron snatched her waist with such tension that she lost her breath, and then found herself writhing in Count Zwingel's arms.

"Do not fear," he whispered, "you are in no danger; but having said you would not be my bride, I having said you should, let us see who keeps their word."

It was in vain for Violse to struggle, for even could she have escaped the count, which was impossible, there were a score of followers behind, who altogether with jingling spurs rode merrily down one side of the mountain, while the most dreadful of conflicts was waging at the foot of the other. Meantime it was the Lord of Rusdorf who had instigated Zwingel to this deed, and he rubbed his hands at home in a self-congratulatory style when morning dawned, and neither Violse nor Zwingel had returned.

"That cake's baked!" said he. "She is Countess Zwingel by this time! And Marien Sohntag can't have her, fine fellow though he be, even if he's alive now, which I can't think after that clamor last night."

But the Lady of Rusdorf was not so easy; she knew that Violse watched the charge from the Bergen's Height, and since Zwingel, too, was gone, she was filled with concealed alarm; her messengers, returning, brought her no news of her daughter; still she resolved to put a brave face on the matter, and

make the best of it; perhaps it was not so bad as she feared, she said. When day opened at last, little sleep had there been in Russdorf Castle, but the swains and maidens from far and near came, brushing the dew from field and forest, to gather round the Maypole, already decked with gayest garlands, and planted in the fertile pastures that sloped below the castle.

"Zwingel will bring her, will bring my little countess," chuckled Russdorf to himself.

"Marien must know where she is," murmured his uneasy wife; "he will soon be here."

But the sunrise had spread its banners and marched away into stainless blue before Marien appeared. Pale and haggard, his blue eyes restless with a painful fire, and his array anything but that suited for a festival, for it was his slashed and bloody attire of battle, he far more resembled the sole survivor of a disastrous defeat than the conquering hero of success.

"Welcome, Haroun Bashaw! What news?" was shouted by a chorus, as he strode through them to the Lady of Russdorf.

He turned and bowed.

"News?" said he. "Did no trumpets sing it to you last night? There is not, nor ever will be again, a hostile Pandour in Croatia!"

Dead silence at so tremendous an announcement fell upon them; then a shout that might have split the welkin, deafened the ears of the listeners.

"And where is *Violse*?" murmured Marien to her mother.

"Where is *Violse*?" she exclaimed for answer, seizing his arm. "Tell me, Marien. Thou knowest she was with thee last!"

"I left her on the Bergen's Height; I returned to find her gone, and the sod trampled by hoofs. I have been seeking—Zwingel must have her! It is he! he threatened. By—"

"By the God of our fathers, madame," said an old Croat standing near, "if he has harmed a hair of the maiden's head, he shall be torn to ribbons by my dogs!"

In another breathing space Marien had called his chosen band around him and related to them that he had need to call them from their merrymaking for a new expedition.

"Where is the *May Queen*?" called a distant knot of revellers, innocent of what was going on above. "The Lady *Violse* was to be our *May Queen*. Where is she?"

"We go to seek her," said Marien, in a low voice, but so clear and resolved that it was heard by the most distant.

In an instant, excited by the suppressed emotion of his tone, the throngs had clustered around him; a wild tumult swayed them all like sea waves. The old Lord of Russdorf began to fear that his plans would go awry, and the savage glances and flashing swords at hand promised Zwingel no sweet repose, should he have truly stolen their chief's betrothed, for that she was that began to be dimly understood among them. The tempest of voices, gestures and passions was at its height. Marien had stepped to their head, bidding twenty follow him, and the little force were moving up the hill, when a white flag blew round the castle corner, a great white banner, borne by a person whose gigantic stature was half hidden behind it. Fearlessly and without a word he strode forward, then furled the flag and displayed, hanging on his arm, *Violse*.

"Haroun Bashaw," said the bearer of this truce, "thou hast conquered me. For that I owe thee no grudge. I wish thee as good luck with thy other enemies; I am so no longer. Thou gavest me my life one time, my brave fellow; Trenck never stays in any one's debt. See, I come to pay for it; an equal bargain we may reckon, eh? I tore her from Zwingel's arms as he crossed my path this morning, while she cried to me for help, and here she is. If there's any more to tell, let her tell it!"

He lifted the *May crown* from some one's hand and placed it on the brow awaiting it.

"Yonder's a priest," said he; "let him do his duty, and as I crown her *Queen of May*, let him crown her *Queen of Albania*!" So saying, with no one stirring to harm him or waylay him, the proud fierce Pandour kissed *Violse's* hand and vanished.

That day the festival lasted in dance, and song, and banquet, till sundown, and when Marien *Sohntag* mounted, with his retainers, for the impregnable fortress on *Givornus*, he took his bride with him. As for Zwingel, he lived through his life as easily as most rascals do, and Russdorf's friendship many a time secured him from injuries which the revengeful Croats would have gladly bestowed. And I am glad to add that the only true and constant friends of Francis Trenck, when dying in prison, as good as betrayed by the empress he would have died to serve, were Marien and *Violse Sohntag*.

THE CURSE OF THE HARLOWES.

BY MARY N. ROCKWELL.

Founded on an English Legend, related by the Sisters of the Convent of the "Holy Child Jesus."

THERE was nowhere in the country round a more interesting family of children than that of honest Stephen Harlowe; and the most interesting one among them was little Philip. As he grew to early childhood the neighboring people shook their heads, and said:

"The old curse that has slept so long has awakened again in little Phil! More's the pity, since he's such a fine lad; but such things like insanity sometimes skip one generation and appear in another. Old Sally's curse hangs over the Harlowes yet."

For in the old days, one of the Harlowes, having wealth at his command, had refused aid to an old woman whose child lay dying of want. Raising her witchlike hands to heaven, she cursed him, saying:

"Keep your wealth, hard-hearted man! and may it prove a weight to drag you

down to perdition! And may the curse of avarice descend with your name even to the end of the world."

With the life and death of this ancestor of Philip we have nothing to do; our story is of him alone. As he grew towards manhood his unfortunate propensity became developed in a more decided manner. In his childhood his mother was often grieved to see that, instead of sharing with his brothers and sisters things which were given him, he hoarded them away until they were spoiled. And as he grew older, every stray coin that came into his possession was hoarded in the same manner—he seeming to value money not for the good it might bring, but for money's sake alone.

At an early age he became enamored of a neighbor's daughter—a beautiful and ami-

able girl—who loved Philip sincerely, notwithstanding his unenviable reputation for avarice, which, young as he was, he had already gained. Her parents gave rather an unwilling consent to her marriage with him, saying:

“Perhaps, after all, he is only a thrifty person misrepresented; and it may be better than that our daughter should marry a spendthrift.”

So the marriage took place; and Philip and his bride removed to a little home of their own. For a short time all went well, and Margaret (for that was her name) hoped that the “cloud no bigger than a man’s hand” would never spread to darken her domestic horizon. Yet, as one after another five little children came, asking of Margaret a mother’s love and care, and of Philip the needful outlay for food and raiment, there came frowns and harsh words, and often rude refusals to Margaret’s timid requests for what he termed needless extravagances, but what the shrinking young mother knew to be absolute necessities for these helpless little ones.

As years passed on, both mother and children trod a thornier path, until almost the bare necessities of life were denied them. Amid all her trouble, much wifely feeling remained to Margaret, and she felt vague fears as she saw that the ruling passion had assumed the form of a monomania with her husband. Sometimes he would be closeted for hours with some workmen in the cellar, while she and her children were forbidden under severest penalties to approach or inquire into their proceedings. There was little trouble in enforcing these commands, for he had come to be dreaded in his family almost as a wild beast, rather than loved and sought after as a husband and father should be.

After these conferences with the laborers were ended, Margaret observed that he absented himself for a certain period every day, but did not presume to inquire where this time was spent. Indeed, it was a relief to this unhappy family when he was away; for even the little food which barely kept them alive, and the wretched raiment and fuel needed to keep the warmth of life in their unfortunate bodies, was doled out to them so grudgingly, and watched with such wolfish eyes, that they would have

most gladly laid down the weary burden of life.

They did not know that while they hungered and were cold the unnatural husband and father was gloating over almost countless sums of gold; ay, of that gold of which a little would have made them so comfortable and happy; which could have restored the beauty of youth to those poor pinched faces and shrunken forms of the children; could have smoothed away the deep furrows which had come untimely upon the once beautiful face of poor Margaret.

Harlowe had caused to be excavated from his cellar a subterranean passage; and at the end of it a chamber, in which he kept his hoards. He had exacted an oath of secrecy from his workmen, and now came every day to enjoy in secrecy counting his ill-gotten gains.

But there came a day when he did not return to his wretched family; and though they waited far into the night before seeking their tattered couches, he came not. After a week had passed with no intelligence of him, Margaret sought a magistrate and laid the case before him.

There seemed no clue to the whereabouts of the miser until poor Margaret bethought herself of the workmen with whom he had been so secretly engaged. They were immediately sent for, and reluctantly acknowledged the work in which he had employed them. Being ordered to lead the way, they did so, followed by the magistrate, Margaret and her children. Touching a spring in the cellar wall, a door before unseen opened, and they found themselves in a dark passage leading to a second door opening in a like manner, where an awful spectacle met the eyes of the horrified group; for there, amid heaps of untold treasure, lay Philip Harlowe—dead of starvation! In his agony he had bitten and torn his right arm till it seemed as if mangled by a tiger. After reaching his retreat, his lamp had gone out; the door closed with a spring so intricate that he could not open it in the darkness; and his fate had been like that of “Ginevra in the old oak chest,” of which old ballads speak so mournfully.

Old Sally’s curse had come home fearfully to this descendant of old Ralph Harlowe.

THE DEATH TEST!

BY WILLIAM H. BUSHNELL.

"It is a foul and a bloody murder, and may God punish the one that did the deed! But may there not be some life remaining? May it not be in my power to rob the grave? It is a dangerous undertaking, and if I am found here I shall most certainly be accused of the crime. Blood upon my hands and clothes, and I have not touched the corpse! Ah! I see how it came. The bushes are stained with it. The body was dragged to this lonely spot. Lonely? Who would ever think of coming here unless he had some foul purpose, save, it might be, a geologist like myself, whom the simple people in this part of the country would call mad. Yes, it would go hard with me, especially as I am a stranger, and though poorly clad, as becomes my present occupation, have a considerable amount of money about my person."

He drew back a few steps from the corpse, upon which he had come suddenly and unexpectedly, and looked around. Without noticing his path he had journeyed to the bottom of a deep ravine before his progress was arrested. High hills rose upon either side, covered with a heavy growth of timber and tangled underbrush. A little stream found its way with great difficulty through the rocks at the bottom, and its waters were never gilded by a single ray of sunshine. Even in the brightest day it was gloomy twilight there, and a more dismal place would have been difficult to find—the very spot for dark deeds, for a murderer's hiding! And there before him, stopping the path, lay a gashed and bloody human body, as if to finish the picture and give gory evidence of its evil character.

His first thought was to pass on. What had he to do with the crimes of another? Why should he mix himself up with that in which he had not the most remote business? His clear head and logical mind foresaw all

the difficulties that would arise should he be discovered and charged with the commission of the deed, and the fearful net-work of circumstantial evidence that would surround him, yet he was a man of the most determined firmness as well as a tender heart, and not for the sake of escaping trouble, or even danger, would he suffer a chance to relieve suffering or save life to pass unembraced. So he drew nearer and, bending away the bushes, looked scrutinizingly upon the victim of some fiend's cupidity or revenge.

The corpse was that of a girl who must have been under twenty years, and the face was one of more than common beauty. The oval of the cheeks was perfect, the nose straight, the mouth small and the lips, now parted by agony, were full and arched. The eyes, wide open and glassy, were blue as the depths of the ocean, and curtained by long lashes a shade darker than her glossy brown hair. The figure was tall and delicately proportioned, the feet petite and exquisitely arched, the hands white and slender, denoting good birth and freedom from manual labor. The clothing, now torn and stained, was of fine material, and the discoloration of the neck, ears, fingers and wrists—the piece torn from the bosom of the dress and the pockets turned outwards—told that robbery as well as murder had been committed.

At once deeply interested, the stranger knelt down, brushed back the tangled tresses, gazed sadly upon the sweet, pallid face, and examined both pulse and heart for symptoms of life, hoping against hope that at least a spark might remain. But his intellectual and usually sunny face clouded, and he shook his head in doubt. The marks upon the base of the skull, caused apparently by heavy blows from a sharp stone, seemed sufficient to have produced death alone, but, in addition to them, blood was slowly oozing from, and con-

gealing upon several wounds, in one of which a knife was still sticking. His profession had taught him skill as well as coolness, and with extreme tenderness and delicacy he made a still closer examination, and began preparations to stanch the blood and dress the wounds.

"With this knife," he said, giving utterance to his thoughts as he drew out the weapon, "I could even thus kill all my enemies, make myself rich, and I—"

The sentence was never finished. Before it could be, a dozen men, who had been watching and creeping near, sprang out of the bushes and pinioned him beyond the power of resistance. Taken beside the corpse, with the blood-dripping knife in his hand, what could he say in defence? The situation he had foreseen had come upon him, and he stood convicted, in their eyes at least, as a murderer. To appeal to their reason he saw at a glance would be useless; they were not of the class that would look deeper than the surface. His defence must be made at another time and place, and in truth he was thinking more of the corpse of the murdered girl than of his own desperate situation, and drawing himself up proudly he asked that she might be cared for.

"Whatever may be your purpose with me," he said, "at least see if there is not life remaining. Take your hands off and let me see if my skill cannot be of some avail. I am a physician."

Scowling brows and clenched fists were the only answer he received. They paid not the slightest attention to his words, except it might be to grasp him even more firmly than before, and hurry him before a neighboring justice to be examined and exhibited as a monster! It was even a more unpleasant situation than he had anticipated, and the chances were desperately against him, but he retained his coolness and prepared to make the best possible defence.

The evidence was given with the utmost bitterness—honestly given perhaps, but without the slightest leaning towards the side of mercy, and with the morbid desire on the part of the majority to see a man hanged, for such a thing had never happened there! And what could he say to rebut the sworn statements of a dozen witnesses? What were his assertions, against the evidence of their own eyes and his bloody hands and clothes?

But he had the satisfaction, if indeed it could be called by that name, to learn who

the supposed victim of his murderous knife was—learn that her name was Ethel Loring—that she was comparatively a stranger, upon a visit to an old uncle who lived near the scene of the tragedy—that she was an orphan, and rich in her own right—that she was known to wear costly jewelry and carry with her a considerable sum of money (all of which was missing), and that she had gone out to take a walk alone and was found as described. These facts, together with his having been detected bending over the body with a knife in his hand, the *out-of-the-way place*, the provocation for the deed in a pecuniary point of view, the almost certainty of remaining undiscovered, that he was poorly dressed, a stranger, had been seen lurking in out-of-the-way places for several days, and that in his pockets was found about the same sum of money and of the same description as that known to have been in the possession of the murdered girl, were dwelt upon by the prosecuting attorney with remarkable force, and the prisoner saw that it was next to useless to attempt a defence.

To all questions he replied in a simple and truthful manner, stating that his name was Alonzo Martin, his age twenty-five—that he was by profession a physician, unmarried, possessed of some means—that a love of geology had led him thither, and that those who had accused him of loitering in out-of-the-way places would have seen that he was innocently studying the formation of the earth if they had given proper attention to the matter. As for his being the murderer of the girl, he denied it in the most emphatic manner, and explained how he came to be bending over the body with the bloody knife in his hands.

"You will deny next," sneered the attorney, "that you threatened to kill all your enemies in the same manner."

"I believe I did use some thoughtless words to the effect that I could, with such a weapon, kill all my enemies and make myself rich, but none such as you would put into my mouth."

"I heard him distinctly," volunteered a strong, rough-looking man, who was said to have been among the first, if not the first, to discover the murder, who had guided others there, and had been the most willing and strenuous in his testimony against him.

Martin turned his gaze upon, and noticed him more closely than he had done before—caught his eye for a moment, and thought

that he shrank back. It might have been mere fancy, but he became more and more convinced that the fellow had some object in getting him convicted, and tried to remember if he had ever been associated with—ever met him before, and given him any cause of enmity. If such was the case it had entirely slipped from memory, and his own position gave him little time for thought, as he was asked to account for the money that had been taken from him being the same in amount and of the same character as that of the murdered girl's.

"It is a case that might happen a thousand times," was the reply; "but permit me to ask if she is indeed dead?"

"You will soon see," growled the stiff-necked justice, "see more than you want to."

"If dead, I have no wish to look upon her again. The horrible sight I have had is fully sufficient, and I have seen enough of death not to be curious in such matters."

"No doubt of it! Murder and robbery is your trade!"

The old uncle of the murdered girl stepped to the side of the justice, and they had a short whispered conversation, but evidently an important one. The purport of it was soon made known.

"Alonzo Martin," continued the officer of the law, "as you choose to call yourself, though no one here is fool enough to believe that to be your correct name, you deny all participation in the foul deed that has been done?"

"I do."

"And are willing to prove it by any means within your power?"

"I am."

"Officers, guard him safely and remove him to the next room. We will soon see his guilt clearly proved."

Without the most remote idea of what was going to take place the prisoner permitted himself to be led into another apartment, and saw, to his surprise and horror, the corpse of the girl stretched out upon a table, still as bloody and ghastly as when he first discovered her in the gloomy ravine! It was a sight that at any time would have caused him to shudder, but now it almost unmanned him for an instant, especially as the dress had been cut away so as to expose a wound in the fair, white flesh. His natural emotion was at once taken as an evidence of guilt, and he heard whispered comments to that effect.

The "I told you so" of the man who had before volunteered his testimony, particularly attracted his attention, and from that instant he watched him as closely as possible without being detected, and summoning his courage, he turned to the pompous justice and demanded what was intended by such an unusual proceeding.

"It is the death test!" was the solemn response.

"You will have to explain more fully. I do not understand."

"We believe that the corpse of a murdered person has power to distinguish between the innocent and guilty. Place one hand upon that wound, raise the other to heaven and assert your innocence—if you dare! If you are indeed without guilt all will be well. If not the blood will flow again."

At another time Martin would have laughed outright at the stupid superstition of which he now remembered to have often read. Yet there was something solemn in thus calling upon the dead to give evidence for or against the living, and he would willingly have been spared the ordeal, for the most simple accident might cause a drop or two of blood to exude from the unclosed lips of the wound, and then his fate would be sealed indeed.

"If guiltless why do you shrink?" asked the man of law. "It is only the murderer that need fear."

He could hesitate no longer without convicting himself in their eyes, and stepping to the side of the corpse he laid his right hand upon the wound and called God to witness his entire innocence. Then he stepped back so that all could see that no blood had followed.

"God has attested your guiltlessness," said the uncle of the poor girl, "but see, the blood is beginning to flow, and the guilty man must be near. Let each in turn do as this stranger has done."

In the opening of the wound and the oozing of blood Martin saw far other things than did the afflicted old man, but he wisely held his peace, and managed to place his back against the door so that no one could go out, and watched each as they went through the death test. But there were no more crimson drops bubbling forth as a sign of guilt, and as the justice declared that all had gone through the ordeal, a sigh of intense relief burst from many lips.

"Not all," replied Martin. "There is one yet remaining," pointing to the one who had

made himself so officious. "That man has kept in the background."

"John Kirkpatrick, is this true?"

"No! It is a lie!" was the hoarse answer.

"It is true," repeated Martin, firmly. "I have kept him under my eye all the time, and I swear that he has not been near the table."

"I have—you all saw me."

But upon reflection no one had seen him, and he was forced forward. Then an entire change was visible. His flushed face grew pale as ashes and his brutish lip trembled. He looked around wildly for a chance of escape—saw there was none, and putting on an air of bravado exclaimed with an oath:

"Well, I can do it again."

With the words he had raised his hand—was extending it—had nearly touched the corpse, when he shrank back with a fearful groan. His eyes had been the first to see that the blood was flowing freely again from the wounds—not one alone, but all!

A strong man at all times he was rendered doubly so now by desperation, and in his tremendous efforts to get away, his coat was torn to shreds and the jewelry and money of which the girl had been robbed fell to the floor, and, raving and cursing, he was carried away to prison.

During this exciting scene Martin had re-

mained unnoticed. When the justice and the uncle of the girl thought of him again they found him with his hand upon her heart, and a smile playing upon his mobile lips.

"What is it?" they asked, in a breath.

"She is not dead! Show me where I can place her upon her bed, and summon some women. She is not dead—only stunned." And he lifted her in his strong arms and carried her to another apartment.

It was weeks before Ethel Loring was sufficiently recovered to appear in court. Then her evidence was conclusive. She instantly recognized the prisoner, and the simple manner in which she told the story of assault, robbery and attempted murder added much to its force. Without leaving the box the jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to serve a long time in prison—a sentence cut short by death.

The trial over, the uncle of the girl called Martin aside and asked the bill for his professional services.

"It is a very large one," was the half-serious and half-quizzical reply.

"No matter, I will pay it. Will give you anything you demand."

"Here, then, is my charge," he replied, taking the hand of the blushing girl. "I came here to study geology, but never anticipated finding such a rare specimen."

THE FATE OF MR. PILLIWIG.

BY N. P. DARLING.

My name is Daniel Grogzi. Mrs. Pilliwig says I am of foreign extraction. She says that the name Grogzi is decidedly foreign. I should say it was, though whether it is French, Spanish, Dutch, German, Italian, Russian or Turkish, I'll be christened if I know. You see, my dear reader, I am an orphan, and unfortunately, I don't remember that I ever was anything else. It is highly probable, that at some early period of the world's history, I had a father, but I never saw him. He probably died and made no sign. Judging of his mechanical skill by my own, I think it was well he didn't make a sign. In fact, if the old gentleman was in any sort of business where a sign was required, he probably got somebody to make his sign that knew how, and he had it painted in gilt letters and hung up over his door, without any bother to himself except the paying for it.

But this is all supposition. We don't actually know anything about the ancient

Grogzi, and between you and me, my dearest and sweetest (you're a lady, of course,) reader, I'm glad that we don't, because I have a strong suspicion that the paternal G. was hanged. Yes, I believe he was hanged, because, in my opinion, any man who will coolly and deliberately hand down to posterity the name of Grogzi, ought to be hanged.

Well, allowing that the paternal G. was hanged, I don't know as we can make any further use of him, and consequently we will return to the subject of this sketch, whom you will immediately recognize as the gentleman who now stands before you.

Now, I contend that, although a man has a perfect right to bear just as horrible a name as his parents have the heart to leave him, he has no right to perpetuate that name to the horrification of coming generations. Consequently, when I met Mrs. Pilliwig and loved Mrs. Pilliwig, and learned from the sweet lips of the beautiful Mrs. Pilliwig that she reciprocated that love, I said thusly:

"Pilliwig, my darling, thou art the quintessence of all loveliness. Beautiful in form, in feature, in name. Yes, the name of Pilliwig is altogether lovely. How sweetly the *Pilli* ripples through the lips! and the melodious ending of the *wig* is truly enchanting. When first I saw you, your beauteous form struck me at once; your love-lighted eyes perforated my heart; your highbred and very aristocratic nose pierced my bosom as never did nose before. Your gestures impressed me altogether very favorably; but your name, O my darling, your name did it, and I said, 'Let me be a Pilliwig or nothing! Be mine, dearest Pilliwig, name and all, and I will cast off the detestable cognomen of Grogzi, and I will appear as a beautiful Pilliwig butterfly. Shall it be thus?'"

Rushing into my outstretched arms, she answered, "Daniel, I am thine, take my name if thou wilt, but be sure and take me with it."

Then we kissed; and so the affair was settled. It only remained for me to petition the legislature to be changed from a Grogzi to a Pilliwig.

It strikes me that I haven't mentioned my place of residence, consequently, I may as well inform the gentle reader, that I have the honor to be a citizen of the town of Bungalow. I am the proprietor of the principal grocery store in that village, and reputed to be worth several thousand dollars, and have lately bought a beautiful cottage, which is now ready for the reception of my lovely bride.

My lovely bride, that is to be, has rooms at the Bungalow Hotel, where she has boarded for the last six months. There I met her, after long years of waiting, there I loved her, and there she promised to be mine.

I think I have made the observation that Mrs. Pilliwig was beautiful. She had a complexion like new milk ("one cow's") hair blue black, which she wore frizzled, in imitation of a brush-broom down her back; eyes of a beautiful dark sea-green; nose just two inches in length, straight as an arrow, with nostrils delicately chiselled by one of the best artists; mouth one inch and five-eighths in width, when in repose—at dinner, six inches and a quarter; lips rather full and cherry-colored; teeth mother-of-pearl, with handsome India-rubber gums; neck white as snow, and flexible as a boa-constrictor; shoulders like polished marble; arms—well, she only carried "small arms;" Bust—O!

beg your pardon—I—I am afraid I'm carrying this thing too far. I forgot myself, you see, as I always do when I get to talking of Mrs. Pilliwig. If you'll excuse me, we won't say anything about her—I really don't know how to express myself—her—her ankles, but I wish it to be distinctly understood that she had two, or perhaps more, I won't be positive as to the exact number.

Now Mrs. Pilliwig hadn't always been a widow. She wasn't born so. No, there had once been a Pilliwig, and he had been christened Peter. Several years afterwards he grew to manhood; but while he was growing to manhood he developed a very strong taste for twisting himself in and out of shape, until at the age of twenty-two he graduated as a first class contortionist, and joining a circus company he twisted himself all over the country, varying the monotony of his life by swallowing swords, firebrands and cheap whiskey.

Well, at last Peter Pilliwig in company with the circus, contorted himself into Bungalow. Flaming handbills announced the arrival of the world-renowned Sig. Contortitwister (he had dropped his Pilliwig upon entering the circus), who had been engaged by Buncombe at enormous expense, for his great moral exhibition.

The great moral exhibition "took" with the good people of Bungalow. The Bungalorites never countenanced circuses, but Buncombe's show was decidedly elevating; it had a strong tendency to develop the moral organs, you see. The lions and tigers teach a man to be gentle, the monkeys teach him something else; and then the wax figures! how could a man stray from the path of virtue after seeing Buncombe's wax figures? That's just what I'd like to know. I tell you he couldn't do it. It is a moral impossibility. Well, after the wax figures there's a little innocent riding around a pretty little ring, considerable tumbling of the "ground and lofty" order, and several other little performances which insensibly remind one of a circus, although we know it isn't. Singular how the old thing works.

Everybody in Bungalow went to the great moral exhibition. I went because I felt it was just what my system required. Mr. Horatio Slingbillie went and took his wife and daughter. The name of the latter was Annie. She was a lovely creature, about twenty years of age at the time, and stood about fifteen hands high.

I must confess that I was rather sweet upon Annie, although I had never given her to understand anything of the sort. I did not tell my love, "but let concealment, like a worm, etc., prey on my dauask cheek," etc.

I obtained a seat near Mr. Slingbillie, who sat between his wife and daughter. The latter didn't seem to be much interested in the performance at first, but when Sig. Contort-twister made his appearance in the ring, her countenance became quite animated in its expression, and her sea-green eyes sparkled with pleasure, and when the contortionist doubled himself up backwards and drank the glass of water placed between his feet, Miss Slingbillie was so lost to everything else, so bound up in him, that she unconsciously tried to perform the same feat, though she might have known that she *couldn't* do it without some little practice; and she opened her mouth to its widest extent when he swallowed the sword, and—but why dwell upon these things? That's just what I should like to know. Wasn't it plain that she loved him? and how could she help it? I put the question to you, my dear young lady, how could she help it? You know something of the sex, being one of 'em. And now when you allow yourself to think calmly and deliberately of that young gentleman's form, of his leg—he had two of them—of his twist, and of his wonderful abilities as a swallowist, was it strange that her heart went out to him at once? Most certainly not. I knew that she loved him, and I felt that wherever he went—she would go, and she did.

Yes, my young and lovely reader, she eloped with the contortionist that very night, and before Aurora, daughter of the dawn, could get one foot out of her rosy-curtained bed preparatory to making her morning toilet, the beautiful Annie had ceased to be a Slingbillie and had become a Pilliwig.

Upon mature deliberation I think I won't say anything about my feelings at the time. Why should I harrow up your souls? Why should I say anything, my dear unsophisticated little creature, to make you think that life isn't all honey and logwood? No, dream on, fair creature—shiver my timbers if I disturb you.

Of course, the first thing to do after the matrimonial noose was made fast, was to write home to papa, asking his forgiveness; and so Mrs. Pilliwig wrote.

Now if this was fiction, this story of mine, you know just how the paternal Slingbillie

would act under the circumstances; but as it isn't fiction, you'll be surprised when I tell you that Mr. Slingbillie didn't make a fool of himself. He didn't swear with a terrible oath, that as she had made her bed so she must lie, because he knew very well that the chambermaid made the bed. No, Mr. Slingbillie didn't do anything of the sort. I admit, however, that he swore, because you see it was a playful habit that he had contracted in his youth, and he swore now just from the force of habit, I suppose, for of course he wasn't the least bit angry. O no! He might have been somewhat excited, perhaps. The honor of having a tumbling-circus-performing-contortionist for a son-in-law was rather too much for his mental equilibrium, and—well, as I said, he swore. That was all.

By request, Mr. Slingbillie wrote to his daughter, saying that if she would immediately return home he would forgive her, and if she *must* have her Pilliwig, why, she could bring him, too.

And so they came back to Mr. Slingbillie's house, and the old gentleman put his hands on their heads and said, "Bless you, my children," and everything seemed to be perfectly lovely, although it wasn't. No, Pilliwig was unhappy.

Now, I think that artists and poets never ought to marry. In fact, any man who is wedded to his calling, as a real artist must be, hadn't ought to wed another *coleen*, because, you see, it is bigamy. And I wish it to be distinctly understood that I don't approve of bigamy, although I might if I was young. Peter Pilliwig was an artist. He was wedded to his profession. How many weary days and sleepless nights he had spent in his endeavors to make himself a first-class twister, a sword-swallower, a tumbler, the world will never know. I'm sorry for the world, but then, perhaps it is all for the best. And what was the world, what was life, what was love to Peter Pilliwig if he couldn't contort? That was just what he wanted to know, and that was just the question he asked himself on the morning of the fifth day of the fourth week of his matrimonial life. And the answer to this question was—"Nix."

Then throwing himself into three different shapes in rapid succession, the lively Pilliwig threw a kiss at the portrait of his wife's grandmother upon the wall, another at his wife who lay sleeping in her little bed, and then murmuring in silvery accents, "Dear Annie, adieu," he threw fourteen double

somersets right out of the chamber window, and landed handsomely in the back garden.

When the fiery god of day arose from his couch of crimson and gold for the purpose of going west—probably with the intention of “squatting”—he found, upon looking into Mr. Slingbillie’s upper windows, that Mr. Pilliwig had gone. Soon after, Mrs. Pilliwig became conscious of the fact of her husband’s departure. The whole family were aroused, but no one had seen Pilliwig. Bungalow was searched and everybody was questioned, but no one had seen Pilliwig. He had vanished—evaporated, in fact, so completely, that not a drop of Pilliwig was left to tell the tale.

(P. S. Mrs. Pilliwig’s jewelry evaporated at the same time.)

Upon this occasion Mr. Slingbillie didn’t swear. He restrained himself by a violent effort, I suppose. Perhaps Pilliwig’s society was not absolutely necessary to his happiness, and consequently he bore up under the affliction “with a smile that was childish and bland.”

But poor Mrs. Pilliwig! She—she—but, no, let us draw the curtain. There are some things so infernally touching, that it is impossible for me to do them justice. If you have tears, you are at liberty to shed them now. Don’t mind me, but weep.

Now, this little affair occurred some ten years ago, although I remember all the circumstances as distinctly as if it had taken place but yesterday.

Well, shortly after Mr. Pilliwig’s departure, I obtained a situation in New York city, where I remained until about a month ago, when I returned to Bungalow, bought out the grocery store of Cheeseman & Butterick, and have carried on the business ever since.

During my absence, I had never ceased to feel an interest in the Slingbillie family, although I heard nothing of them until I returned to Bungalow. Then I learned that Mr. Slingbillie had been dead nearly a year, and that his daughter, after selling the house and settling up her affairs, had gone to live with an aunt in Boston. Well, and where was Pilliwig? No one knew. He had never been heard of since his sudden departure from Bungalow, though the probability was that he was still contorturing himself to admiring multitudes on the “tented field.”

I believe I have previously remarked that at one time I was rather sweet upon Annie Slingbillie, but I assure you, my darling

reader, that I never knew what it was to love until about six months ago. Such natures as mine may be “sweet” upon several females at one and the same time, but they are so peculiarly organized that they can’t love but once.

It is now about six months ago that a meeting occurred between myself and one who cannot fail to exert a very strong influence over me for good or evil. I felt at once that she had the power to drive me to distraction, or lead me on to happiness. She had changed little, and that little was, in my eyes, for the better. She had always been lovely, but she was now excruciatingly beautiful. But what attracted me more than anything else, perhaps, was her name. Need I inform you that it was *she*? Your own heart has told you that already. Yes, upon entering the parlor of the Bungalow hotel, upon a never-to-be-forgotten evening six months ago, I met the widow Pilliwig.

“Dan-yell!” she cried.

“Mrs. Pilliwig!” I groaned. “At last—at last we meet—we collide. And he?”

“Is dead.”

“He twists no more, poor fellow,” I sighed.

I led her to a seat, and for four hours and sixteen minutes we conversed upon the weather. Then we got to talking about the high price of nutmegs, and from that we glided unconsciously on, till we found ourselves talking of the joys of matrimony—of the bliss of loving where there are two souls, etc., and the same number of hearts that beat as one.

Dear reader, did you ever court a young and lovely widow? If you never did, I advise you to commence at once. To say the least, I think you will like it, and then it’s so easy, too. If you are married, perhaps it would be as well to wait until you are more favorably situated, because, in that case, it might have its drawbacks. I’ve known a man to be drawn back so hurriedly, that it tore the hair all out of his head. But if you are single, I say go in.

You see, I’m giving you the same advice that I gave myself. Yes, for the last six months I have courted the widow Pilliwig strenuously. She assisted me, of course, and at last the day—the day was named. As you are very discreet, I don’t object to telling you that it’s next Wednesday, or at least, that *was* the day fixed upon; but now—O now—something has occurred which will oblige us to postpone the consummation of our happiness for some time longer.

It was only last night—shall I ever forget last night? Singular, but everything happens to me at night—I was sitting in Mrs. Pilliwig's private parlor at the hotel. Need I say that Mrs. Pilliwig was there? If I remember anything about the circumstances, and I think I do remember them only too well, Mrs. Pilliwig was sitting upon my knee, and her lovely arms were twined in imitation of the now famous woodbine around my snowy neck, and her dear face was cuddled up under the left wing of my mustache, and her starry eyes were looking up into mine, and—no, young man, I will not proceed any further. You are too young; but you will understand all these things when you grow older.

We were happy.

"Mrs. Pilliwig," I murmured, in a voice as soft and sweet as the breathing of a lute. (I don't know anything about lutes, but Tom Moore, or some other poet, has given me to understand that they breathe remarkably soft.) "Mrs. Pilliwig, this is lovely."

"Yes, it is, rather," she replied.

I was just about to impress a kiss upon her snowy brow, when the door was thrown open and a man sprang into the room.

The widow shrieked.

"Ha!" cried the intruder, and with the rapidity of lightning, he turned seven beautiful and highly artistic somersets, landing handsomely at her feet.

"It is!" screamed Mrs. Pilliwig, "it is he!"

"You have guessed my sex," he yelled, "I am he," and striking a beautiful attitude, he seized a large corkscrew that was lying upon the table, and swallowed it without winking.

"But, my dear fellow," I remonstrated, "you are dead."

"Dead! Ha! ha! ha! That was a joke, my dears. I put my own death in the papers.

Why? because I wanted to raise some money, and thinking that Mrs. Pilliwig would like to marry again, I thought I would give her an opportunity. She has seized the opportunity and I have appeared. Now, to come to business, how much filthy lucre will you give me to disappear?"

"Horrible!" groaned the widow.

"On the contrary, my dear, it is highly amusing and instructive," returned Peter Pilliwig. "I don't know when I've seen anything more delightful."

"But, my dear Mr. Pilliwig, I insist that you are dead, sir," I said.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Mr. Pilliwig. "Does this look like it?" he cried, kissing his hand and springing lightly upon the table. Placing a bottle of wine between his feet, he said, "And now, my darling Annie, I will drink to the health and happiness of yourself and your future husband." And waving his hand, he bent backward until his lips had nearly reached the wine, when—crack!—something snapped, and Peter Pilliwig the contortionist fell to the floor.

Mrs. Pilliwig shrieked and fainted. I rang the bell, and then lifting poor Pilliwig, I laid him upon the sofa. A servant came rushing into the room.

"Run for the doctor."

Doctor Rumzweat happened to be in the house, and so came immediately. He looked at poor Pilliwig, felt his pulse, and placed his hand on his heart. "Why," said he, "the man is dead."

"That's just what I told him," said I.

The doctor examined further.

"Why, his spinal column is broken in sixteen places."

"Horrible! horrible!" groaned Mrs. Pilliwig, who had just recovered from her swoon.

Yes, horrible! But, alas! such was the fate of poor Pilliwig.



THE FATE OF SCARLET HATCHET.

BY CHARLES H. DAVIS.

"Hialloo, Joe Wickenham! What makes yer so late? I've been a waitin' fur yer on this here stump nigh above an hour!"

"Waal, what if yer hev? I tell yer, I couldn't git here no sooner, if I'd a' tried! I'd a done it if I could!" was the reply.

"I didn't 'spose but what ye would; yer needn't git snappy so early in the mornin'! But what's kept yer?"

"Why, yer see, one of the cows didn't cum home at all last night, an' I went out an' hunted the prairie over arter her till nigh onter twelve o'clock, till the moon sot, an' then I turned in, an' I've been out ever since daylight, but I can't find tail nor track on her on the plain nor the river bottom."

"That so, Joe? Injuns catched her, mebber?" said the other, with a serious expression in his eye.

The one called Joe Wickenham shook his head slowly, and was silent a moment.

"That's none of them varmints round in these quarters now, I think, the blue-coats drove 'em way back to the mountains only last week," he said, at length. "Perhaps she's swum the river, though—we'll take old Nell, if you're willin', and while we're down in the bottom land a choppin', I'll mount her and take a explorin' jaunt across the ford on her back."

"Sartin, Joe, you shall hev my hoss an' welcome, as long as I've got a beast ter lend. But let's jog along back to the house and get her; we'll leave our axes sticking in this here stump."

It is now time to introduce to the reader the authors of this characteristic colloquy. They are Western settlers—or, as the vernacular aptly hath it, squatters—on the prairies bordering on the upper side of the North Fork of the Platte River, in Nebraska. The first whom his companion addressed as Joe Wickenham, was a young man, perhaps twenty-five years of age, of light, sandy hair and complexion, with mild, hazel eyes, and a form that towered like a grenadier's above the head and shoulders of the other. Bill Oakes, the shorter of the two, had nut-brown hair, and an eye black, sparkling and sharp as an eagle's. He made up what he lacked in

height in the massive solidity of his physical structure—his chest, and shoulders, and toughened palms being wonderfully expansive for so short-statured a person, in their aspect.

These two young men were near of an age, lived near each other, had spent their time from infancy on the broad prairies around them. Consequently, though they might have acquired very little culture in the arts familiar to civilized life, they were proficient in the lore of the dead letter of the plains, and, practically speaking, had reduced the art of handling a rifle to a science, and adopted it as a profession.

To-day, however, they forsook their trail for game, and, as the reader finds them, were about starting for the river bottom to fell timber for a certain purpose, which both thoroughly understood, though Joe said but little on the subject.

There was a female head stuck out of the little opening that served the double purpose of both door and window of Bill's cabin, when they arrived there.

"Hialloo, Joe! That you? Why! Why, I thought you an' Bill was half-way to the bottom by this time!"

"Bottom o' what? That shows how much you think on us, hey!" called forth Joe, as though trying to drown by the explosion some inward sensation he preferred not to exhibit, but which in reality he did exhibit very plain, for his "gills" suddenly grew scarlet, and his parted lips disclosed a set of teeth that would have been the delight of any dentist.

"Bottom of the river, *Smartee!* now you've got yer answer," cried the other, who also responded, ditto color in the cheeks, ditto teeth.

"We've come back to get the hoss. Joe's cow's run off, and he's goin' ter take Nell awhile to look her up," explained Bill, going towards the little shed, where the said animal was housed.

"Sorry, Joe—come in, wont yer?"

"No, thank yer; Sallie, how are ye, my gal?" said the other, trying playfully to pinch her cheek.

The individual whom he had called Sallie

was a person of slightly plethoric and material embodiments of form and feature, but made up for it by possessing a very pretty face, a bold, handsome, straight nose, and large, saucy, black eyes, that blinked and sparkled like a squirrel's. A glance would have assured a stranger that she and Bill were brother and sister, and another glance would have told him that the two persons now regarding each other with such magnetic glances across the little door-sill, while the tongue of each wagged not inaudibly, were lovers.

"When are you going to begin to build our cabin, Joe?" said the girl.

"Wal, Bill and I ealcerlates we'll cut logs enough to-day for to put it up, then thar's the roofin' and the door, and all, besides old Nell's got the timber ter haul up from the bottom land."

"But Joe, do let's hev a window in ourn? Father and mother never had none in this shanty."

"What's the use? the door's big enough for them 'ere black eyes o' yourn to look through, I reckon."

"No, Joe, make a window, you know it's goin' to be bigger'n this one," pouted Sallie.

"Wal, little un, don't pout so, yer shall hev a winder—but, say, give us just one, a little un, Sallie?"

"Git out, you imperdence!" cried Miss Sallie, in indignation at her lover's presuming to seize that opportunity to pay himself in advance for constructing windows in their future dwelling, and a smart slap followed close upon the report of the kiss.

Bill was just coming round the corner of the shed with Nell when this little episode occurred, but he very wisely forbore to see it. Joe laughed at his rebuff, though his cheek smarted, and the three, horse, Joe and Bill, jogged away from the door.

Sallie, as Joe called her, and whose original name was Salina—corrupted by these people of homely names into the dissyllabic Sallie, when some of finer taste would have had it, perhaps, Lina—stood and looked several moments after the trio. As she gazed, a feeling of something akin to a pleasant sadness, if there be such a paradox, came to her eyes, and softened their brilliancy into tender depths, that made her beautiful; for Salina Oakes was a handsome girl, with mellow features and splendid dark hair, and her proud brother would have nicknamed her the belle of the prairies, only that he knew or cared nothing about belles in any way.

"I'm half sorry I slapped him so hard, but there was Bill a looking," she said to herself, going into the cabin, "and he loves me so awful hard! he's a strong 'un—my Joe is—how I'd like to see him and a bar tackle it once, or one o' them sassy Injuns!" And her full merry laugh rang out, and made the two men look back toward the hut.

But we will follow the two young men. The first in our story, as is already understood, was about to begin the erection of a log hut to shelter himself and his intended bride. In this he was voluntarily assisted by the young woman's brother, who, since the death of father and mother, had looked out for his pretty sister, and was glad to find she was likely to have so good a protector for life as Joe Wikenham, his old childhood's friend. Besides, let it be whispered, Joe also had a sister, and that sister had a lover, and that lover was—Bill Oakes. The spot for the erection of the new cabin had already been chosen, on the level just south of the Platte Bluffs, distant a couple of miles, and where the timber was to be cut, and this was a full mile from Bill's cottage. For these people—the squatters—were ever opposed to near neighbors. As they walked along, their axes and the indispensable rifle on their shoulders, Joe, who led the unwilling horse, took it into his head that it would be a more feasible as well as sensible plan, to make the animal carry him on her back, instead of his having to drag her by the nose behind him. Accordingly he leaped on her back. At this moment a prairie-hen started from the cover beneath Nell's feet, and that animal gave such a sideways bound as to send our tall hero, axe, rifle and all, flying in various directions after the innocent hen! Joe picked himself up, likewise axe and rifle, and stood confronting the beast, in a serio-comic way, taking no notice of Bill's unrestrained laughter. He said to the horse with as much admonitory pathos in his tones as if the creature had been an object of intelligence:

"Darn ye! Yer couldn't du that ere agin if yer was tu try, could yer? Well, cuss ye, don't ye try!"

And with this speech he remounted the animal, who didn't 'try it on a second time!"

The young men reached the "bottom," or land by the river, and after allowing the horse a sip of water from the stream, tied her where she could browse, while they set themselves to the task of cutting down some stalwart timber. One of the ungainly forest

monarchs lodged his head in falling in the boughs of his neighbor, and hung, refusing to come nearer the earth.

"Climb up and loosen her! You're the spryest, Joe!" cried Bill; and then he sat down on one of the huge logs to wipe the sweat from his brow, and rest while the other sprang nimbly into the bending tree, and climbed his way towards the top.

In a minute he uttered an exclamation which startled Bill into a sudden erect position.

"Bufflers! By thunder! There's such a sight o' dust I can't see for sartin, it's somethin', though!" And down the tree he slid, in a hurry, to the imminent danger of his pantaloons.

Seizing their rifles, the two woodchoppers rushed out of the strip of woodland that skirted the River Platte, and stood gazing intently over the prairie towards the northwest whence came a rolling cloud of dense dust. Said dust was caused by some powerfully-moving object or objects behind it—any Eastern greenhorn of a Jonathan could have told that—but at this particular moment, and in this peculiar instance, it would have seriously taxed the intelligence of even a cunning trapper to have told precisely what class of moving objects had occasioned such a commotion upon the bosom of the otherwise quiet prairie, for the reason that the dust was so thick as to utterly hide the objects from view. Presently the cloud, which had been advancing in the southeast direction, turned its course suddenly from the spot where our two heroes stood with their hands on the hammers of their rifles, and moved in a course due east, showing by this plainly what and who was behind it. The effect of this manœuvre on the young men was instantaneous and peculiar. They dropped flat on their faces upon the prairie, as suddenly as if a couple of dozen Leyden jars had been connected with the nerves of their thumbs!

"Injuns! Sioux!" cried Bill.

"And they are gonn' right for your cabin! Sallie, God help her!" and Joe was running, his body bent downwards to secure him from observation by the enemy on the plain, while he went ahead almost as fast as a horse might trot. Bill followed him, both of them trailing their rifles on the ground, and keeping near the confines of the wood, till they could gain sufficient distance to enable them to run straight across the prairie, without being discovered by the savages, who, grim

with war paint and feathers, and mounted on tough Indian ponies, were galloping right for the trapper's little cottage! They were thirteen in number. The endeavor of the young men was to get to the cabin before the Indians, but in this they were destined painfully to be disappointed. The Indians were already close upon the hut, and they had a good half mile to run yet.

"Now for it!" shouted Bill, to his companion, and both of them left the cover of the woods, and dashed out over the open prairie in full sight of the redskins, should they cast their heads behind them.

O, how they ran, as lover and brother only would, in such a case. Joe's forehead was covered with sweat. But his was cold sweat! And his face grew white and his lips compressed, and as he ran he spoke never a word!

"See, Joe! the door's open! O God! She doesn't even know they're comin'!" and Bill's heart grew dark and his eyes flashed desperate determination as he ran.

The savages, with a chorus of horrid whoops, dashed up to the open door of the cottage. Some dismounted, and a couple with brandished tomahawks, rushed into the little dwelling. Bill's heart leaped into his throat at this sight. Where was his sister? Surely she must have heard them as they came up! Yet there was the door open still. All this flashed through his brain while the foremost savage was entering. Two minutes more and *they* would reach the scene!

But the savages came out, empty-handed, and with whoops of disappointment that told of ill success in their expected discoveries.

"Thank the good God, Bill, the girl's gone!" cried Joe; and the next moment the two trappers were lying flat in the long grass, for the eyes of the baffled Indians were now scouring the plain for a glimpse of the inhabitants of the deserted cabin, provided there were any. Joe and Bill did not give themselves a moment to rest, but instantly commenced to crawl back on their hands and knees to the woods. They were already half way there, when Bill raised his head just so as to peep through the heads of the grass, to see how the Indians were amusing themselves with his property. Several were making explorations through the house and shed, destroying or appropriating all they could find that was valuable, and one fellow had piled a quantity of hay against the windward corner of the cabin, and was preparing to light the same.

"Them cussed red varmints is settin' my house afire! I won't stand that, darned if I do!" and quick as a flash the young man brought his rifle to his eye, and fired—dropping the said "varmint" in his little scheme of innocent mischief, as a plum falls from a tree!

"What have you done! You're a fool, Bill Oakes!" cried Joe, in evident alarm at the rash act of his companion.

"Done! I reckon I've killed one of them devils yonder, and done the Almighty good service by it. He'll git fire enough whar he's gone now, cuss him!"

"But you've drawn 'em this way, and the gal, most likely, is in the woods here! Why don't you strike out one side?" as a shower of bullets came from the Indians in reply

"They'd hev been arter us in less than ten minutes, any how; they can see our trail plain as day in this tall grass!" replied the other, loading his rifle as he still crept slowly forward.

"Here comes the Beelzebub's own cussed ones! We shall have to run for it, spite of pitch!" cried Joe, accelerating his longitudinal motion upon the ground.

For the Indians, aroused from their blissful recreations of destroying and plundering the white settler's little home, were now bearing down directly upon the spot where they then were.

"Then let's run—the sooner the better—start!" cried Bill.

"Whoozoosh! Chase us and be darned ter ye, ye devilish thieves, ye haven't got our scalps yet!" yelled Joe, in responsive defiance to the whoops of the dashing savages as the two young men sprang from the grass and rushed at headlong speed towards the cover.

Had they looked to the left they might have seen another trail leading from the cottage to the woods. It was not the trail made by Joe and Bill on leaving the woods at the first alarm. It was far to the left of that, and had been made before theirs.

Into the woods rushed the squatters, with their enemies shouting and firing at them three hundred yards behind. In the middle of the Platte was a shrub-covered island, containing about a rood of land. Bill plunged into the river, and diving under the water, swam for this island.

Five minutes before another swimmer had left the island to swim in an exactly opposite direction to the one Bill now took. That swimmer was a young woman—none other

than Bill's sister, Sallie! Now, to account for her presence there.

She had discovered the approach of the Indians long before her brother and lover had done so, for, as the reader will remember, at the first they were not galloping in the direction of the cottage, hence were not obscured by the dust which, driven by the wind, rolled directly before them. She had thus been able to make her timely escape, to the spot where she expected to find her brother at work, in the bottom land.

But she had not found them. Her first thought was that the Indians had slain or captured them; her second that they were hastening towards the house to her. She did not return to the opening to look if this was the case, for she knew they would not expose themselves to sight while on the trail of the savages.

"They will find soon enough that I have escaped, and this spot is the nearest place for them to run to when the savages chase them," she said; and straightway, with subtlety born of the prairies, she put in execution a shrewd plan. Running down the river to a little cove where the still water was overhung by deep banks and thick foliage of stooping trees, she listened a moment to the mingled yells of the savages, and then she unloosed her brother's canoe. Taking the paddles in her plump, strong arms, she rowed quickly out into the stream, and shot towards the little island. Running the boat around behind the island, she secured the painter to a shrub, and, afoot, crossed to the hither side. Then divesting herself of sundry impediments known to be peculiar to feminine attire, taking off shoes and stockings, throwing aside her hat, and coiling her magnificent hair about her brow, a kind of natural turban, she emerged from the bushes at the edge of the water, immersing first one then the other shapely bare ankle and leg, then without the slightest particle of noise, slipping beneath the liquid, she swam like a graceful young swan for the shore—the skirt of her light calico dress scarce impeding her motion at all.

This was how Sallie chanced to be not ten feet from the spot where her brother leaped into the water, as we have told. He managed to get one chance to come up and breathe before the Indians pursuing him dashed after him into the cover. Then he sank again, noiseless as before, and when he rose again he was close to the island, and safe among the bushes. But poor Joe was behind, and

more hotly pursued, followed at least by as many as six Sioux, who leaped from their saddles without checking their horses' speed, and plunged into the woods at his heels!

Right down the bank he plunged and into the water. He knew it would be folly to try to swim the gauntlet to the island that held out its arms of green so protectingly towards him. The savages were good riflemen, and would pick him out with a bullet the moment he stuck the tip of his nose above water for a breath of air. He saw the cove where Bill's canoe usually lay. He was surprised to find it gone. But the place was still and dark, and the overhanging boughs formed a good support as he lay on his back in the water, as well as a sure protection. Joe thought of one thing. There was a pathway to the cove, worn by Bill's feet in coming and going for his canoe. The Indians might take a notion to follow it up and discover him. But he reflected that the savages like a fresh trail, and never condescend to the foolishness of following a beaten path. He did not know then that Bill had the moment previous swam off to the island from the bank near by, though he wondered what had become of his companion. He chuckled as he heard the redskins who had been pursuing him howl their rage and disappointment up and down the river bank above. He did not know that twenty feet above him, in the tree, concealed from view by the foliage, silent and motionless as a cat, sat Sallie!

The six Sioux who had made special effort to secure Joe's scalp, were astounded to see him so suddenly and unaccountably disappear from their view. One of them, the chief of the band, as might be seen by those familiar with the import of the war paint on his hideous countenance, saw the little cove, and though he did not see either Sallie or Joe, he smelt a rat, "very loud." But he wanted the glory and emoluments consequent upon securing our hero's scalp to redound solely to him personally, and to ensure this felicitous result, he determined upon doing the job himself. So raising a yell loud enough to waken the ghosts of all his grandfathers who ever drank firewater and butchered white women and babies, and were promoted to the Happy Hunting Ground by the Great Spirit, in consequence of said meritorious acts, he ran at the same time up the river as though he had struck the missing trail. This sent his companions in a body, yelling up the bank of the stream, while he instantly turned his back on

his braves, and crept shyly along till he stood peering his ugly face into the cove where Joe lay. At last a leaf rustled in the wind, a ray of sunshine shot into the cove, and enabled the chief to see Joe's face! An expressive "Ugh! Waugh!" embodied his delight, and revealed to Joe the real and critical nature of his situation, as the chief, dropping his rifle, began to crawl swiftly out over the overhanging boughs that nearly touched the water by Joe's weight in clinging to them.

Joe was aware of his danger now, but he was as wily as the savage. The chief held his knife ready for use. Joe drew his also, but the moment the Indian was nearly within arm's length of him, he slipped into the water like an eel, letting go the branches, whereon hung the chief, so suddenly as to pitch the latter into the water feet first, while he held on with his hands—doused to his middle.

Joe was about to improve his opportunity and dive a second time, when something struck the struggling and astonished chief a heavy blow on the head which made him slide into the water out of sight, with no more noise than a log already half immersed. Joe looked up astonished beyond measure, when he saw who had been his deliverer, and beheld Sallie, the chief's rifle in her hand, clambering rapidly down the tree. She crept out on a limb and he took her in his arms in the water just as the half-stunned savage rose. He had lost his knife, in the to him most unexpected upset of his equilibrium, and though not entirely senseless, yet he appeared decidedly docile and stupid for one of his ferocious calibre. Altogether he was in quite a manageable frame just then, and our two lovers were not slow in taking advantage of his state. Joe had raised his arm to strike him dead, but Sallie had interposed. She evidently had an object, for the howling children of the wilderness were coming that way again. It behoved them to act quickly.

Joe was not slow to comprehend Sallie's plan of action. Seizing the savage, Joe forced his arms behind him, and held him floating close in the rear, with his face towards the shore, that he might be the more readily recognized by his discomfited brethren, and would form a perfect barrier with his body, through which the balls must needs pass to reach Joe and Sallie, who swam ahead, in a right line. Then they struck out, and had got a good eight rods from the shore before the terrible whoop of the baffled savages smote their ears. When the Indians dis-

covered the situation of their leader, there was a most infernal hurrah's nest amongst them. They levelled their rifles. The half-stunned chief held his head so feebly upon his bosom, that Joe feared the savages might think him already dead, so he ingeniously pricked him with his knife-point to start his ideas—which piece of successful trickery caused the noble savage to cry out lustily, and the Indians were deterred from firing on their own chief. But with dreadful yells, they threw away their rifles, and with knife and tomahawk leaped into the river. They could make double the progress of Joe and Sallie, with their living impediment in the shape of the old chief who was able to do very little towards propelling himself, but the young couple had a good start, and by strenuous exertions reached the little island before their foes had half crossed the current.

The old chief was instantly bound with withies to a cotton-wood stump in plain sight of the savages, and directly behind him, and kneeling under the protection of an immense fallen log, of this species of wood, which is impervious to bullets, Joe and Sallie at once threw themselves and cleaned the wet from their rifles on the dried leaves, for their weapons were not flint locks, or of the kind too sensitive to moisture, and drew out the wad of leaves from the muzzles that had kept the barrels dry, and then prepared to give their enemies a reception—Joe with his own rifle, and Sallie with the chief's.

"Now, my gal, we'll give 'em a taste o' lead, hopin' as how they m' be led to kinsider the error o' their ways!" said he, with a chuckle, the first words he had spoken for the last exciting ten minutes.

"Wonder whar Bill is?" coolly asked Sallie, wiping the drops of river water from the hammer of her weapon.

At that very instant, about fifty feet to the left of them, a report came so loud and startling that it made them both jump, and at the same instant they saw a splash in the water, and the foremost Indian pursuer flung up his arms, bounded a yard upwards and fell a corpse—floating down the Platte.

"That was a good 'un, Bill!" cried Joe, as at that moment the author of the shot sprang into their midst, behind the log.

"Here we be! All on us safe! Thank God! Now let's give 'em pepper!" cried Bill, not concealing his delight.

Joe and Sallie ran their muzzles out just over the log, and deliberately picked out the

two nearest Indians who were within excellent range. They went the way of the first, but the remaining two, now having learned wisdom, waited till Bill had completed his loading, then dove under water. But this availed them little. The position of the squatters on the island overlooked the water, and the moment an Indian's nose appeared above the surface, the owner thereof was sent to Davy Jones's locker. The other savage, by sheer desperation, and swimming under water, managed to get back to where the remaining eight of his comrades were gathered. The three behind the log simultaneously discharged their rifles among the party. Two fell, the remainder ran behind the trees, and raised their rifles to return the compliments thus lavished upon them. But the old chief, now thoroughly aroused to a realizing sense of his situation as a target for the bullets of his own braves—broke forth in the most discordant howls, which had the effect of checking these demonstrations.

It was now the evident intention of the Indians to get out of the woods and run away—they were pretty well disgusted with their mission. There were only five of them left, out of the original crew of thirteen! But here a new difficulty presented itself. The moment a redskin showed his feathered top outside a tree-trunk, a ball from the squatters' sure rifles straightway took off his nose, his ears, or went through his head!

At last, the whole band broke from their cover, and with yells of defiance rushed for their ponies in the opening. Only three of them ever reached the plain, and these might have been seen an hour after riding as hard as ever they could towards their wigwams in Southern Oregon, having fully come to the conclusion that the Great Spirit did not send them on this mission.

The squatters left the chief where he was, bound to the stump—and rowed themselves across in the canoe—appropriated the Indians' knives, hatchets, rifles, ponies and wampum, and threw the dead bodies into the river. The next day, with the chief, they followed them in the canoe, floating down as far as Fort Pike.

"I've been wanting to see you, Scarlet Hatchet, for some time—our boys have a slight difference to settle with you!" said the colonel, to the stoical chief.

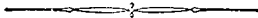
Bill and Joe started and opened their eyes. Was this then the notorious Sioux warrior, Scarlet Hatchet? Even so, for Bill and Joe

received a large reward for him, which they immediately appropriated to making good with government their claim to all the land for ten miles each way from their claims above the North Fork of the Platte.

Sallie and Joe were married, and lived in

their new cabin; Bill married Joe's sister and lived in the old cabin.

Years afterwards a man came to North Fork and bought land and started a saw-mill. Now there is a thriving village there, and Joe and Bill are the richest men in all the county.



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THE FATE OF THE REDGAUNTLET.

BY W. H. MACY.

In the month of July, 185-, we anchored, in the barque *Zodiac*, within about four miles of the sterile coast of Siberia on the northern shore of the Ochotsk Sea. It had been calm since morning, and no whales had been seen. A boat expedition was at once despatched to explore further inshore, as the polar whale is often met with close in to the rocks in very shallow water. My place was with the second mate, as midship-oarsman, and we soon separated from the other boats; for we pulled on diverging lines, so as to approach the shore at different points, and thus "spread the chances" of meeting with our giant prey.

After two or three hours spent in fruitless search, we beached the boat in a snug little cove, and took a run on shore. The boat-steerer and I left the rest of the party, and climbed a high hill whence we could look seaward and command a more extensive prospect. But we saw nothing but the broad expanse of smooth water, and the *Zodiac* riding at her anchor in the far distance. Unwilling to return, we pressed onward, ascending and descending, sometimes jumping from rock to rock, until we mounted a still higher eminence which formed the headland of a small bay, until then unseen.

We had lost our own ship from view before we gained the western brow of this bluff, where we could look down into the bay. The scene before us was such as to transfix us with astonishment, expecting, as we did, to behold nothing but Nature's work, bearing the stamp of perpetual solitude.

The beach, as well as the tussock-land of the little valley beneath, was alive with strange-looking human beings in uncouth dresses, running to and fro, as if all in search of the same thing. There must have been more than a hundred in sight, though we did not make any actual count. Two small boats and a ship's long-boat lay at the water-side, and within less than a mile of the shore, a large ship had dropped her anchor. The sails were hanging in all sorts of festoons, no two alike, as if they had made a clumsy attempt to clew them up, and abandoned the job when half finished.

On the deck of the ship were another hundred, more or less, of the same description of beings, duplicates of those on shore. The vessel herself, though apparently of a superior class, showed evident signs of a want of seamanlike care about her sails and rigging. Her hull looked worn and rusty, and marine

grass was clinging thickly along the bends.

"Who and what are they?" said my companion, Peterson. "The ship is no whaler, anybody can tell. And what would anybody else but whalers want here in this sea?"

"The ship has run away with them," said I, "or they with her; it's hard to say which. Can they be Russians?"

"No, there's no look of the Russian about them. There's too many of them to be the regular crew of a craft like that; for there are no man-of-war marks about her. She's either an emigrant ship or a transport with troops."

At this moment some one of those below caught sight of us standing on the brow of the hill. The word was quickly passed among the crowd, and their faces were all upturned at once, with wild clamor and gesticulation.

"Chinamen!" said I, at once. "No other people ever had their eyes set into their heads at such an angle as that."

"They've coiled up their tails and stowed them away under their hats," added my comrade. "That's why we didn't make them out sooner. But they've got terribly out of their reckoning, to bring up here in Siberia. What do you suppose they are hunting for?"

"Grub, to be sure; but mighty little of it they'll find here. They have run short of provisions. See! they are trying to climb up here to speak to us."

"We can do nothing for them; and I don't care to trust myself among two hundred hungry Chinese. They might eat us without salt."

"We had better hurry back and report what we have seen. I don't understand how such a ship as that (for she appears to be English) should be in possession of this mob. There must have been some kind of foul play about it."

We hastened back towards where we had left the rest of the boat's crew, leaving the Chinese to follow, which some of them appeared to be determined on doing, as fast as they were able. We arrived none too soon. The officer already had the boat afloat, and was waiting impatiently for us; indeed he would soon have pushed off with the men he had, and left us behind. Dark clouds in the south-eastern board betokened a wild night. The Zodiac was already under way and crowding sail hard to claw off from the land, while the most urgent signals were flying for our return. The other boats had been seen

to start out long ago. We began to relate what we had seen, but were summarily cut short by the officer.

"Can't help it, now, if the whole Chinese race are starving over there! Pull ahead! Let's get aboard before it blows on a gale. It will be too thick in an hour from now, to find the ship, and we shall be half way between somewhere and nowhere."

We understood well enough that such a situation, wherever it might be, was an undesirable one. We plied our oars with a will, and luckily got safely on board before our ship was hidden in the mist. We saw three of the Chinese, who had climbed over the hills, run down the beach and extend their arms in air above their heads. But we could do nothing for them.

It blew a severe gale all that night, and we carried what sail our spars would bear to keep her off the lee shore. There was but little darkness in so high a latitude at that season of the year. But the mist was so thick that nothing could be seen. We talked over the situation of the poor Chinese among ourselves, and saw nothing but starvation before them in that barren spot; while all agreed that there was no possible chance of escape for the strange ship, lying, as she did, with her canvas loosed, and everything in confusion, when the gale came on.

When at length the south-easter had blown itself out, the weather cleared with light winds off the land, and it was not until the third day that we again approached the headland which Peterson and I recognized and pointed out. We passed it with the ship and opened to view the little bight beyond, where we had seen the strange vessel at anchor.

Our minds were, to some extent, prepared for the spectacle of utter destruction that met our view. The whole extent of beach between the two headlands was strewn with a chaos of wreck. Spars, cordage, sails, timber, casks, iron-work and all the thousand and one things comprising the material and fittings of the once proud ship, were heaped in wildest confusion. Not enough of her remained in the original form to point out the particular spot where she had struck.

The Chinese greeted us with yells, not strong but shrill, such as starving men might well utter. Our boats, loaded with provisions, were soon speeding away towards the beach on an errand of mercy. I could not fail to observe, as we neared them, that their num-

bers had been greatly reduced within three days. The whole force could hardly have been a hundred, in sight; while we had estimated it at more than double that number on the former occasion, including, of course, those afloat.

The poor ravenous wretches had to be kept back by force, that the distribution of food might take place in such a manner that all would receive a fair share. There was no lack of fresh water, and they had already managed to make several fires, which were burning fiercely. But of food there was literally nothing to be found here, save a few muscels at low water.

With some of the ship's sails, they had built a rude shelter, away up high and dry. Under this canopy, we found several poor fellows, who, weak from want of food, or disabled by injuries received at the time of the shipwreck, were unable to crawl out and join the rest, who appeared to care very little whether they lived or died. And, searching still further, we found, stretched out to die in an obscure corner of the tent, a boy, with fair hair and Anglo-Saxon features, emaciated to a skeleton by hunger and brutal treatment.

Tenderly we lifted the lad and carried him to one of the boats, which was at once sent to convey him on board the barque. We directed the Chinese, all who were strong enough, to follow the shore of the sea towards Ochotsk city, where they would find succor at the hands of the Russians. We saw no way to dispose of the remnant but to take them on board for the present. We might divide them among the various whaleships when we should again meet the fleet. Just now, we had the burden all on our own shoulders; for the American ships had all gone, either up into the northeast gulf, or over to the Shantar side.

Hardly a man was found among the Celestials who could talk more than a few words of "pigeon-English," nor was it likely that what they would tell us was to be depended upon as truth. We supplied them with provisions to last them, with care, for a few days, and saw them started on their overland journey. Some ten or twelve of the wounded and infirm were taken on board, and we made sail to the southwest.

With tender care and judicious treatment, the boy was so far restored in a few days, as to be able to throw light upon the strange affair, and clear up the mystery that hung over it.

The ship to which he had belonged was the *Redgauntlet*, owned in London, and chartered at Macao, to carry a cargo of Chinese laborers to the Chinha Islands, to work among the guano deposits. She had sailed from Macao with nearly four hundred on board, all young and able-bodied men, but drawn from the most depraved and reckless class of the Chinese population.

It did not appear, from the boy's story, that the possibility of any trouble or outbreak among the coolies had ever entered the mind of Captain Duganne. For no extraordinary precautions had been taken, such as are always considered a matter of course in vessels employed in similar service, as Guinea slavers, and convict-ships bound to the penal settlements. The vessel sailed with only her regular complement of twelve men before the mast; and a watch which was barely sufficient to work the vessel, could hardly be expected to exercise much vigilance over an army of barbarians.

Nor did the commander show much discretion in his conduct towards his passengers. He was a hard, overbearing man, as well in his dealings with them as with his own crew. The coolies were kept on a very meagre allowance of provisions and water, even from the outset of the voyage. And at the first symptoms of discontent among them he had them all confined between-decks under gratings, and only allowed to take the air at stated periods, a few at a time. In vain the officers remonstrated, and enlarged upon the difficulty of enforcing such orders with the small force at their command. The captain became more and more tyrannical, and the coolies, who had embarked well-satisfied and in good spirits, were, day by day, inspired with deeper hatred towards him.

They met with much bad weather in the China Sea, but worked their way through it, and were, at last, as they thought, in a fair way for a pleasant run across the Pacific. But that very night, after the gratings had been fastened down as usual, an unwonted noise and stir was observable among the Chinese; and on investigation, it was found that they had forced their way through the bulkhead into the run under the cabin-floor, and had secured possession of two barrels of rum which had been stowed there.

Captain Duganne was now thoroughly alarmed, as well he might be. It was madness to attempt to recover the liquor from them; nothing could be done but to keep

them confined below until they had swallowed it all, and got over their revel. The noise subsided about midnight, and the watch grew careless again, supposing the coolies were sleeping off the effect of their potations. But with characteristic cunning, they had thus thrown the crew and officers off their guard at the very time they had planned for their uprising. At six bells in the middle watch, when all was still both on deck and below, the gratings were suddenly burst upward, and the Chinamen, mad with ruin and rage, pounced up at the hatchways like a volcanic eruption, making night hideous with their peculiar savage war-cry.

The few men in charge of the deck made a desperate resistance; but the struggle was short. The human wave rolled on and overwhelmed them, the coolies displaying the most utter recklessness of life, closing upon the seamen and bearing them down by sheer weight of numbers. In a few minutes, the Englishmen were thrown into the sea, some of them yet alive, and the deck of the Red-gauntlet swarmed with mutineers in full possession.

Some of the watch below, who rushed out on hearing the alarm, shared the fate of the rest; but the mate and two seamen made their way into the lower hold. The captain, coming out of the cabin, was met and felled by the blow of a handspike. Andrew, the boy, who was directly behind him, was seized by one of the coolies, who seemed to be a leader among them, and pushed into the round-house. The door was closed upon him, and he was left undisturbed for a time, as most of the crowd supposed he had been thrown overboard.

He heard them beat the captain to death with all sorts of weapons, and saw them, through a chink, wreaking their vengeance upon the inanimate body before it was thrown overboard like the others. Then there was a rush of the Chinese to the main-hatchway, apparently attracted by some special alarm in that direction. Andrew pushed open the door and stepped out from his prison-house to see what was going on.

The crowd in and about the main-hatchway was very dense, and a confused jabbering, as of drunken men divided in their counsels, was going on, when suddenly an explosion was heard that appeared to shake the ship to her keel. The crowd surged back amid a sulphurous smoke, and shrieks of agony rent the air.

The boy, appalled at the sight, stood still as the coolies rushed aft. He was seized by two stout fellows, who lifted him on the rail, and were in the act of throwing him to the sharks, when the man who had already once saved his life again interfered. This man, who seemed to have some sway over his comrades, now took Andrew by the collar, and enjoining silence, made a loud speech, to which all the rest appeared to assent. He was then given to understand that he could go about unmolested.

At daybreak, the Chinese began to throw overboard such of their comrades as had been killed by the explosion. Had they been so many dogs or pigs, the survivors could not have disposed of them more coolly. They crowded into the hold, reckless of danger, where they found the mate and the two sailors, also killed by their own mine. Andrew heard the splashes as they were tossed into the sea, one after another; but the sight was too dreadful for the boy to look upon.

He supposed that the mate had arranged a keg of powder with a train, near the main-hatch, and had called the Chinese round it, with a view of destroying the greater part of them by this means. But he must either have miscalculated his fuse, or else have fired the train by accident sooner than he had intended; so that he and his men had no opportunity to escape.

The coolies now having full and undisputed possession of the vessel, gave themselves up for the whole of that day to feasting and revelry. With her helm lashed amidships, the ship went wherever wind and weather might carry her. But it held fine and moderate for twenty-four hours, by which time the liquor had been all drunk or wasted, and more sober counsels prevailed.

The numbers of the Chinese were greatly reduced, fully a hundred of them having been killed or mortally wounded, in the first attack, and by the after explosion at the hatchway. But they seemed to care nothing about this; human life was of so little account, as to be hardly worth bestowing a thought upon.

Andrew's preserver, Kung-Chow, as he was called, now took the command, so far as any one could be said to do so. A man was put at the helm and an attempt made to keep the ship headed to the northward. They dared not return to a Chinese port where the ship would be known; but their idea was, to make land somewhere in one of the Japan

islands, of which they possessed a kind of vague knowledge. But they only knew that they lay somewhere to the north of them, and had no skill in working or estimating longitude; while the boy himself knew little more about those matters than they did. The chronometer, not having been wound, had run down and stopped; so that he could make no use even of his limited knowledge.

The boy's account of the proceedings on board the Redgauntlet after this date was gathered at various times in disconnected fragments; and is necessarily rambling, like the cruise itself. The scenes among three hundred reckless semi-savages, adrift in the Pacific, with little or no knowledge of navigating, guiding or handling a ship, may be imagined. The Chinese took advantage of fair weather to take in the light sails and furl them, after a fashion, under the boy's direction. With the heavier ones they could do no more than Spanish-reef them; letting them run down when it blew fresh, and hoisting them up again when it moderated.

Almost every day, they had terrible fights among themselves in which all sorts of weapons were freely used; and at such times, the authority of Kung-Chow was completely set at naught. Many were killed in these brawls, and, as before observed, were forgotten as soon as they were put out of sight. The boy was frequently beaten and maltreated, living in constant fear; but his life was always spared, at the intercession of Kung-Chow.

Owing to the filthy condition of the ship, disease of an infectious character broke out among them, and the mortality, for a time, was frightful. But this abated as they drew into colder latitudes, and the between-decks became less crowded, in consequence of the great falling off in their numbers.

At length, after several weeks tumbling about, having kept a general northerly direction, land was discovered, to the great delight of the Chinese. They felt sure that this was one of the Japan islands, and that their wanderings would soon be at an end. The boy was now ordered to the wheel, to keep her headed in for a passage which lay open before them.

But the wind increased to a gale, and he was obliged to change the course for the safety of their lives. For two days they beat about on soundings, as they knew by the color of the water. They might literally be said to be groping in the dark; and when the sky again cleared, no land was to be seen. They

did not know, of course, what was plain enough to us, afterwards; that they had overshot their mark, had got a glimpse of one of the Kurile chain, and had drifted through into the Ochotsk Sea!

From this time, they would seem to have abandoned anything like a definite object, and to have suffered the ship to take the bit in her teeth. It was strange enough that they should have drifted away up to the northern shore, across the sea, without having been seen by any whaler.

From waste and improvidence, their provisions now ran short, and they were reduced to very short commons; for they had actually been at sea more time than would have been necessary for the ship, under proper guidance, to have made the run across the Pacific, and landed them in Peru. Day by day they reduced the allowance of food; quarrelled and fought each other to the death for a bit of bread or meat; no land met their view, and still the Redgauntlet drifted on, none knew where.

Andrew was in actual danger of starvation when the food began to run low, for the stronger of the coolies did not hesitate to rob the weaker, and the poor boy was considered fair game for all. Many a time his morsel was snatched away from him and paid for with a knock-down blow. Maddened with hunger, he one day watched an opportunity to appropriate a whole biscuit from the limited stock in the cask, but was detected in the act. Two Chinese seized him to execute summary vengeance; Kung-Chow interfered to save him; and a desperate fight ensued. Four men were killed in the *melee*; the boy was hardened to such sights; but his last hope seemed to have deserted him when he saw his fast friend stabbed to the heart.

He expected, as a matter of course, to be killed and thrown overboard himself. But a greater refinement of cruelty was to be displayed in their disposal of this poor lad. He was shut up in one of the hen-coops, to be starved to death!

As may be supposed, after the master-spirit Kung-Chow was gone, there was no longer even a semblance of system or subordination among the famishing wretches. That day and the next sufficed to clean out the bread-cask to the last crumb, while several deaths diminished their numbers, as they fought for the last mouthfuls. Cannibalism must be their next resource, and woe to the weaker!

But the following morning found the ship

beachmed with the land but a short distance off. They managed to clear away and drop anchor to hold her, and crowding into the boats, pushed ashore in search of anything that might sustain life. 'This was the day on which Peterson and I had made the discovery, and the boy was, at that time, confined in his narrow prison on deck, waiting for death.

But that night when the gale came on, sensible that the ship must be lost, and gifted with the strength of desperation, he had forced his way out. Those on shore, holding the boats in their possession, refused to make any effort to save their comrades in the ship, and the distance was too great to attempt to pass by swimming in that temperature.

She dragged her anchor and drove, broadside on, against the rocks, with more than a hundred souls on board. Many of them, in their feeble state were washed away and drowned, but the boy escaped, almost by a miracle, reaching the shore more dead than alive. Nothing was found but a small bed of muscles, a mere mockery to a hundred or more starving men. Small parties of the strongest had started both east and west along the coast, the day before our timely arrival. But Andrew had been brought so low that he no

longer made a struggle for life. He had crawled under the canvas where we found him, and another day of starvation would have placed him beyond the reach of help.

He remained with us and finished the voyage in the Zodiac. The others whom we had taken on board were distributed in various ships.

We afterwards learned that but a small fraction of the overland parties ever reached Ochotsk city, though doubtless the poor Russian settlers thought them quite numerous enough. Many gave out exhausted on the road, and some were found dead, who bore unmistakable marks of violence.

But few relics remained of the Redgauntlet when I again visited the place, on a subsequent voyage, three years afterwards. The fierce storms of Arctic winters had swept nearly all away, and, in some places had changed even the face of the beach. A few pieces of rusty ironwork were still to be found; and, at some distance inland, a piece of a ship's headboard on which the letters "GAUNT" were legible. And near by, more suggestive than aught else, a human skull, with a part of the hair attached,—plaited in a queue, as it is worn by all, high and low, in the Celestial Empire.

THE FATED SISTERS.

BY GUSSIE M. WHITMAN.

FERNLEY HALL loomed up in the distance, very prison-like and gloomy-looking, as the family carriage bore me thither on a comfortless November eve. I leaned back against the cushion, and tried to imagine myself as I used to sit in the library with papa, having a quiet talk with him during the twilight hour; I could almost see the flicker of the flames in the grate, and the elfin shadows sporting in the dim old room; and scarcely realized that I was a lonely orphan, journeying to a home among strangers, out in the great bustling world—alone!

A distant relative of my father's, on hearing of his decease, had written me a friendly letter, urging me to come to her, as she was the nearest of kin to me in all the wide world; and I decided to go immediately, for I was lonely and sad, and could not endure the thought of living in the great house alone. I was not obliged to accept Mrs. Fernley's invitation from pecuniary considerations, for I was possessed of ample means for the supply of my temporal necessities; had I chosen, I could have rushed into the glittering circles of gayety and fashion, where there would be many to flatter, and pet, and court the young heiress; but my heart ached for true companionship and sympathy, such as I hoped to find in the abode of my friend and her daughters.

I had never seen any of the family, so all through that long monotonous drive I allowed my imagination to roam at will and bring from the land of Fancy the forms and faces of those whom I was soon to meet, having just the appearance I wished them to have. There would be a kind motherly lady, who would take me to her heart at once, and there would be pleasant, charming faces of young girls, in whose cheerful society the stiffness and demureness of my manner would gradually disappear, and I would feel light-hearted and gay once more as in the cheery olden time.

The carriage-way wound between rows of tall poplars, that lifted their heads to the gray sky above; and the disagreeable

evening wind, shaking the great trees, made me shiver and draw my thick plaid closely around my shoulders. A vague feeling of dread, a sensation of utter loneliness came over me, as the coachman, reining the horses, and bowing low, said to me:

"Here you are, safe at Fernley Hall, Miss Lester!"

I felt as if my welcome were going to be different from what I had anticipated, and the tears rushed to my eyes, as with throbbing heart, and trembling limbs, I walked up the broad stone steps to the entrance. The stony eyes of the great carved lions on each side of the door seemed to stare at me and chill me through; I felt as if I were about entering some cloister gate, leaving behind me the sunbeams, the delights, the beautiful things of the world forever! I strove to master this indefinable emotion in my soul; I was not entering Fernley Hall as a dependent; I was my own mistress, with my time and means at my own disposal; I need not dread patronizing airs, or proud bitter words; naught like these could come to one in my situation, even if my new friends should prove different from what my fancy had painted them; but I would fain believe them kind, and good, and true. What had I to fear? The world was before me; I was not compelled to remain at Fernley Hall if it proved not to be a real home to me. I threw back my long veil, and stepping firmly to the great oaken door, raised my hand to the huge knocker, when I heard footsteps within, and the face of Mrs. Fernley appeared to my astonished view.

She was a tall, spare woman, with high cheek-bones, a large nose, and cold gray eyes which she fixed full on my face as she bade me welcome, and drew me in to the light and warmth of the parlor. Her smooth hair was laid low on her forehead and put back above her ears, and a small headress of ribbon completed her coiffure. Her dress had nothing of that graceful, flowing amplitude so becoming to elderly ladies; it was short and scant; a huge black apron was worn over it, and a long,

straight sacque, with large loose sleeves, completed her strange and somewhat uncouth costume. Her tones were low and smooth as she addressed me, and her movements were easy and gentle. I could not help studying her words, her manner, her looks, as she glided about the apartment, drawing the curtains together, and arranging the articles on the long table. Though she seemed all sweetness, and kindness, and courtesy, my heart did not go out toward her as I had hoped; something within seemed to say to me sternly:

"Gertrude Lester, be firm! assert your independence, and let this woman know that you have a will of your own, and do the right!"

She drew a great easy-chair up to the fire, and sat down beside me, looking into my eyes searchingly, while I returned the gaze steadily, making some laughing remark.

"The girls will be in presently," said she; "those are their portraits on the wall; the one in the niche is Constance."

I rose to gain a nearer view of the charming face, all aglow with animation; the golden brown curls caught back from the white temples with tiny rosebuds, and the bright arch eyes, so bewitching and tender! How I longed to behold the fair original, and love her as a sister!

"This is Eleanor's portrait," continued Mrs. Fernley, going towards the opposite wall. "They were painted about a year ago, but you will see that they have grown somewhat thin and sober, they are so busy, dear girls! I cannot keep them from their books and embroidery. I am glad you have come; perhaps you may induce them to go out more—they care little for driving or walking."

Just then the door opened, and a tall young lady—the Eleanor of the picture yonder—entered; yet methought the eyes were less peaceful in their expression, and there were traces of emotion on the pale face, as she smiled with a seemingly forced gayety, and cordially welcomed me, calling me "Cousin Gertrude," and kissing me heartily.

"I will go and hurry Constance," she said, tripping lightly away.

"I have a stepdaughter, as I suppose you know," said Mrs. Fernley, slowly, after Eleanor had gone.

"No, indeed, I did not know it!" I said.

"Who is she like, Eleanor or Constance? And is she at home?"

"O yes! but she is not like either of my daughters, she is a willful, slovenly girl; I don't know what to do with her sometimes, she has such a temper, and she is so sly! Don't be too familiar with her; I warn you, dear Miss Gertrude; she will presume so! she will torment your very life out! Ah, what a trial she is to me! but for the sake of my dear husband who is dead and gone, I try to bear with her!"

She sat with her hands crossed on her lap, and her dull eyes lifted toward the ceiling, looking the personification of pious endurance.

Constance and Eleanor came in, arm in arm, and we were soon conversing cosily together.

"You are too industrious, Constance!" I cried, laughingly, and drew the work from her taper fingers. "Now I have come; out of respect to your guest, you must walk, and drive with her, and let your cheeks get round and rosy again! Why, I can scarcely believe that picture in the niche yonder to be yours!"

"O Cousin Gertrude! surely you cannot want me to grow into a red-faced, blowsy country lassie! You know we *will* grow pale and dull at this dreary season! There's not much pleasure in walking or driving in these dismal fogs, pierced through and through by the biting November winds!"

"Why, you have some sunny hours, don't you, Connie? I hope Fernley Hall has a few bright days, or I shall get terribly blue with sitting always in doors!"

"The bright days are getting to be very few at Fernley Hall," replied Constance, I thought with a little sigh. "You haven't been used to sunshine all *your* life, have you, Gertrude? You lost your dear papa, and you never had a brother or sister. I can't imagine how you can look so cheerful, and well, and happy!"

"It does seem to me sometimes that I take trouble too little to heart, but I can't help feeling gay when I am in the company of girls of my own age. We must all have our share of grief, you know,

"Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary."

"Ah yes! it would be endurable if it were but *some*," replied Constance, with a little sigh again; and I fancied the tears dimmed her blue eyes as she spoke.

"I suppose mamma has gone to find Mildred," said Eleanor, glancing round the parlor; "our stepsister is somewhat reticent, Cousin Gertrude, but she is not as strange as mamma thinks; she has seen much trouble; you will be gentle to her?" She spoke somewhat hurriedly, for footsteps were heard in the hall.

"Certainly, Eleanor," I answered quickly, and the next instant I was face to face with Miss Mildred Fernley, who was ushered in by the old lady, and introduced as "My daughter Mildred, Miss Gertrude. She did not wish to come down, she is so very diffident, but I prevailed upon her to do so. I hope her acquaintance with you may prove beneficial to her in removing obnoxious traits of character!"

Mildred's cheek glowed, and her lip curled with indignation at this speech. I ran to her, and taking both her hands kissed her, and said I was certain we would be good friends, at the same time asking her to be seated beside me that I might see which she was most like, Constance or Eleanor.

She was very tall and quite unlike her sisters. Eleanor was dark-haired and dark-eyed; Constance was a pretty blonde; Mildred's hair was of a dull brown color, and her eyes were large and sad; yet the smile that wreathed her red lips, and lighted up her whole countenance at my greeting made her appear really beautiful to me, and I could not help admiring the long silken lashes that veiled her usually downcast eyes. She seemed nervous and constrained in her manner, and did not take part very readily in our conversation; this I attributed to the strange introduction, and also to the presence of Mrs. Fernley, whose cold eyes seemed ever on Mildred's movements.

I longed to retire early, that I might have a quiet reverie, all to myself, so I was glad when my hostess, taking a light, said she would show me my chamber, if I wished to rest after my journey.

I followed her up the broad staircase; Eleanor and Constance tripping lightly behind, and coming with me into my room to wish me happy dreams on this my first night at Fernley Hall, and then going to their respective apartments, leaving me alone.

The great square room was comfortably furnished, as indeed the whole dwelling

seemed to be; everything was solid and substantial, yet withal elegant and even luxurious. I wished that it was a sweet moonlit summer night, that I might throw open the window and look at the stars, and the blue sky, and think my whole life over, but the inclement November weather prevented any such sentimentalism, so I drew a low chair up to the little fireplace, where a cheery blaze danced and glowed very pleasantly.

Each member of the Fernley family passed before my mental eye, and paused a while for me to remark upon them and conjecture about them. What anomaly was Mrs. Fernley? Was she, with her soft easy tones, and quiet ways, and polite attentions, a veritable ogress, feeding on the wounded sensibilities, and troubles of her stepdaughter? I resolved then and there to befriend Mildred if I saw any signs of injustice toward her. Mrs. Fernley dared not thwart me; I am certain that my looks and manner declared plainly to her that I did not fear her or any one; that I was not easily cowed or intimidated.

And what of the two fair girls, who seemed like drooping buds betimes, as though some secret grief was gnawing at their hearts?

"Ah! some foolish love affair, I suppose," I said to myself. "How thankful I am that I have no experience of such things!" And it was with a degree of pride that I gazed at my face in the large mirror, which reflected a countenance of healthy hue, hearty and careless looking. "I hope I shall never have to endure a grief that will steal the freshness of youth and health from my cheeks," I said, as I unwound my black braids, and let them fall around my shoulders.

Suddenly I felt an unaccountable desire to open the door of my room, and walk through the long silent hall. My slippers feet moved noiselessly along, and I reached the windowed recess, and stood gazing out on the black night. The great poplars shook in the wind, and the raindrops were beating against the glass. Was it fancy? or did I really hear the patter of softest footsteps coming along the passage? I held my breath and drew behind the heavy velvet curtains, listening intently. Surely the tall form of Mrs. Fernley passed me and turned into a narrow corridor, disappearing from view! It was nothing strange

for a lady to be seen walking through the rooms of her own dwelling, even at that late hour; nevertheless I felt impelled to follow her quietly, as if she were some midnight marauder on her way to do evil. After many windings and turnings, she opened the door of a dark room and entered, closing it after her cautiously. I stood shivering and listening at the keyhole, wondering what I was to hear.

It was Mrs. Fernley's voice, still smooth and clear.

"Why are you sitting here so late, Mildred? A fine thing for a young lady to be standing at her window at night staring at nothing! Retire this instant! And what is this in your hand? A letter, indeed! from young Endicott I presume! Mildred Fernley, are you engaged to Howard Endicott?"

The reply came, scornfully indignant.

"It is no business of yours whether such is the case or not, but I *am* the affianced of Howard Endicott, and, madam, he will protect me from your cowardly insults and persecutions!"

A heavy blow must have been dealt the poor girl, for a quick scream reached my ears, and the cold purring voice was saying:

"Shame, shame on such a display of temper in a young lady of your standing! Howard Endicott shall know what a vixen has inveigled him into an engagement!"

I heard her stepping towards the door, so I was forced to hurry swiftly back to my room, though I longed to confront the unkind stepmother, and give her my opinion of her conduct towards Mildred. As she stepped silently by my door, I opened it a little and exclaimed:

"Who is there? Is there any one hurt? I fancied I heard a scream just now?"

"O Miss Gertrude!" said the soft voice, "were you disturbed by the noise? Mildred is somewhat nervous on such nights as this, and requires my presence in her apartment to soothe and quiet her, before she can compose herself to sleep. She cares so little for the comfort of any one; I don't suppose she thought it would disturb you."

Just then there was a sound of horse's hoofs upon the carriage-way, and in a moment, a quick startling rap at the outer door.

"Who can be coming at this unseason-

able hour?" exclaimed Mrs. Fernley, descending the stairs slowly, while I vanished into my apartment. I heard a man's heavy tread through the hall, and then no other sound broke the deep stillness that reigned in the Fernley mansion.

I tried vainly to sleep; my brain, so busy with conjectures and surmises, refused to be quiet, and with the first gray dawn of the morning, I rose and determined to find my Cousin Eleanor's apartment, and see if she knew aught of the arrival of the previous night. I knocked at a door on the opposite side of the long hall, and a voice, the voice of Eleanor, bade me enter.

"Ah! you are also an early riser this morning?" said I. "Have you, too, been afflicted with wakefulness and restlessness, dear Nellie?" for she was dressed and sitting in an armchair by the front window.

"Now don't, pray," said she, playfully, "give yourself credit for being the only early riser in this Hall of Fernley, for you see I have arisen long before you, but it is not my usual habit to rise so early. The arrival of last night disturbed me, and I could not sleep with surmising who might be here. I suppose you have sought me to see if I can enlighten you as to the cause of such an unseasonable disturbance, but really, I do not know who it could have been, unless, indeed, it was my brother Philip."

"O, I had nearly forgotten that you had a brother! I recollect now, that Mr. Fernley had a son and daughter when he married your mamma. Has he been travelling? Mildred will be very glad to see him, will she not?"

"I know she will be delighted, but I fancy mamma will not be well pleased at his coming. He was here a year ago with a friend of his, Doctor Arnton"—she seemed embarrassed as she mentioned the name, and a flush spread over her cheek. "They were here a month, and the time passed very pleasantly."

"Ah! I imagine that same Doctor Arnton must have borne away your heart when he departed, if I am to judge by your looks, Nellie."

"Fie, Gertrude!" answered she, rising nervously, and standing by the window, the rich crimson folds of her robe sweeping the floor, and her eyes glowing as if with some pleasant remembrance. "He

went away with Philip to travel in Europe, and probably never thought of me afterward! You would have been charmed with him, Gertrude, had you seen him; he could converse so brilliantly and he carried himself so nobly!"

"I really wish I could have seen him! Haven't you his portrait to show me, that I may have some idea of my friend's hero?" I laughingly replied.

She blushed brightly, and opening a drawer handed me a picture saying:

"There he is! he gave me it at parting, requesting that I would not forget him, or the pleasant weeks we had spent together. I almost thought he had come back with Philip last night, but I heard only the footsteps of one. Probably in a year he has entirely forgotten his friend Eleanor."

"He is a noble-looking man, certainly, but there seems to be an expression of sternness around his mouth which does not to my mind make his face look lovable and kind, yet as he is your *beau ideal* I am satisfied with him for your sake."

Eleanor replaced the portrait in the drawer with a heavy sigh, which quite startled me, and turned again to the window. I went to her side and we stood with arms twined about each other, watching the wintry morning sky of blue and gray, and the bare trees, and the brown earth.

"Why, yonder is a lake!" I cried, delightedly, as I espied a sheet of water in the distance, amid rocks, and little hills, and evergreen trees. "We will have a pleasant day, after all the wind and storm of last night; see, the sunshine is struggling out of the piles of cloud! I must walk to that lake this very morning, and you shall accompany me!"

"I could not walk so far, nor could Constance, but if you really wish to go I dare say Mildred would be glad to walk with you. There is somewhat of a legend connected with that water yonder. It is said that many years ago there was a grand old castle near it, where dwelt a fair maiden, who gave her love where it was not returned, and wearying of her dreary existence she ended it beneath those cold waves. I never was there but once, and I hastened to leave as soon as possible, for I could think only of the poor maiden as I gazed on the lake's sparkling surface. It is very beautiful to go there in the summer; Constance has often been there on horseback."

"Alone?" I said, almost without thinking of what I was saying.

"Sometimes, but frequently in company with Sir Edmund Lovel, who, by the way, seems quite attentive to Constance."

"Indeed! Does he visit here? And is he really her lover?"

"He calls sometimes, and then he will remain away for weeks, and she hears of his frequent attentions to Miss Blanche Orville, a dashing young lady whose father's residence is three miles distant. I am inclined to believe that he merely visits here to pass away time, having no serious intentions. O Gertrude! I fear for poor Constance! She is growing so pale and thin! He has not been here for three weeks, and I know my sister's heart is bound up in that man—no, I will say in that careless, heedless flirt! Sometimes she is so animated and light-hearted, so wildly joyous and gay, and then she will stay by herself for hours, and come down stairs looking so woebegone, and listless, and dull! Sir Edmund's manner towards her is often, to my eyes, very lover-like and tender; sometimes I really believe that her affection for him—which I know exists—is returned; yet I have heard and seen enough to confirm my opinion of him as being a trifler with woman's affections. People say that before he came to this place he had formed engagements with three young ladies at the same time, and went suddenly away, leaving them all nearly heart-broken. There is nothing vicious in Sir Edmund's character, but he is fond of admiration, extremely susceptible to feminine charms, and he is also very changeable in his disposition; he is determined to enjoy life and society, to lavish lover-like attentions upon every handsome young lady he meets, and is perfectly indifferent as to whether any one's peace of mind is forever disturbed on his account. You couldn't help being fascinated with him, Gertrude."

"Well," answered I, "I must think this all over at my leisure; don't you think it high time we went below, dearie? I should think you would be impatient to see your brother, and learn of the whereabouts of that truant lord of yours!"

Eleanor turned quickly, and walked to the mirror, where she stood fastening back her shining hair with tiny rosettes of rose ribbon, and arranging soft lace about her

white throat. She turned and took my arm, saying lightly:

"I feel dull this morning, cousin, but I will try and be cheerful for your sake. Let us see if Constance is ready. I heard Mildred go down half an hour ago."

Constance answered Eleanor's gentle tapping by saying she was not quite ready, and bidding us go without waiting for her, she would come presently.

The large breakfast-room was pleasant, with a ruddy blaze in the fireplace, and the long table with its china and silver plate. A gentleman sat by the fire with his head bent forward on his hands, and by the chair stood Mildred, looking very thoughtful and sad.

Philip Fernley—for it was indeed he—rose as Eleanor approached him, acknowledging his introduction to myself very gracefully, and clasping her waist, he imprinted a kiss on the fair face of his sister, saying jocosely:

"Why, Nell! what has stolen the roses from your cheeks? they were blooming enough when I was here last!"

Eleanor blushed painfully, and Mr. Fernley, noticing this, looked thoughtful for an instant, as if doubting whether he should say more or not.

"Where is Constance?" he said at length; "she ought to welcome her brother after his long absence! Is she ill to-day?"

"She is coming presently; she told me not to wait for her; she will be much pleased to see you, dear Philip."

"Where is your mother, Nell? I think it's quite time we breakfasted. Mildred, dear, don't look so rueful," said he, going to the window where she stood listlessly gazing out on the leafless trees, and the brown lawn beneath.

How kind and brotherly he looked, with his smiling brown eyes and good-natured though sunburnt face, its brown mustache shading such a pleasant mouth! I feared lest he might notice my interested gaze, and think me rudeness itself, so I turned to look at some ornaments on the mantel, while Eleanor pulled the bell cord violently. The summons was answered by a stout, quiet-looking girl, whom Eleanor addressed as Katie, and who answered the question as to whether she knew anything of her mistress's whereabouts by informing us that she had seen Mrs. Fernley going in

the direction of Michael Lane's cottage about an hour before; she had left no message about breakfast.

"You know, Miss Eleanor, she often goes away in the morning to see some sick folks or something of that sort. Shall I bring the coffee, miss?"

"Yes, Katie," and turning to me, she said half apologetically, "Mamma has some rather eccentric ideas; she frequently goes for a long walk in the morning and does not return until breakfast is over."

I imagined that Mr. Fernley and Mildred seemed rather pleased than otherwise at the lady's absence, as they seated themselves at the table. Eleanor insisted on her sister's pouring the coffee, and the easy graceful way in which she performed the task surprised me, her manner was so animated, and her lively sallies drew laughter from even sedate Eleanor. Philip entertained us with a vastly interesting account of his travels, mentioning once or twice the name of Doctor Arnton, and I observed Eleanor redden again and drop her dark eyes suddenly.

"By the by," said he, with assumed carelessness of tone and manner, "Ned was called home by the death of his father six months ago, and I have never heard from him since, till yesterday I saw the announcement of his marriage in the newspaper! Queer, isn't it, Nell? He and I used to be such inseparables—I may say—I think it strange he never wrote to inform me of these doings. However, his letters may have failed to reach me in my roamings."

I glanced hurriedly at Eleanor; her face was ashy pale, and her hand trembled violently as she raised her cup to her lips, evidently struggling to be calm. Philip, noticing her appearance, commenced an account of a lively adventure in Italy, where he was in danger of being arrested as a brigand. The humorous recital could not fail to amuse us, and by the time our meal was finished, Eleanor was laughing and chatting almost gayly.

"Now where is that other sister of mine?" exclaimed Philip, going to the door. "I really must go in search of her myself, the recreant damsel!"

When he had gone, I put my arm round dear Nell and drew her to the window.

"Now, darling, your gay cavalier did not prove loyal to his fair lady. Did he ever

give you occasion to think he preferred you to any other?"

"No, Gertrude, and I endeavored to conceal my feelings from him, and am certain I succeeded. I see it was foolish for me to cherish his image in my heart when I always doubted his caring for me, or remembering me but as a friend. I must now banish all thought of him; the Fernley pride will aid my resolve. It couldn't have been real affection I entertained, I would fain believe, otherwise it would have been returned, according to novels and romances."

"That's the way to think and talk, Eleanor. You will see some one yet whom you will love as you never loved this Doctor Arnton. Let him and his lady love go; you will find a truer heart some day."

"No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own."

Just then Philip and Constance came in, the latter pale as a ghost, with dark circles round her blue eyes, as though she had been weeping the long night through. She tried to smile a good-morning to us, but miserably failed, and, sinking into a rocking-chair, complained of a severe headache, and refused Philip's kind entreaties to take some refreshments by saying it would only make her head worse; she would sit and rest, and we all must talk, and laugh, and be as merry as possible, without her joining in our conversation.

"Philip, Cousin Gertrude would like you and Mildred to accompany her in a morning walk to the lake, if you are so disposed," said Nellie, twining her arm around his neck in a sweet sisterly fashion. "If you are only going to be with us a week, and then are going so very far away again, you must be as agreeable and attentive to Miss Lester as possible during your stay. Now take that bit of sisterly advice, and proceed to act upon it!" And her laugh was really quite merry.

"Miss Gertrude Lester," said he, rising and bowing gravely, while his lips were smiling, "consider me at your service during my short stay at Fernley Hall. Should you require my assistance or companionship in walking, driving, or boating, pray do not fear to call upon me, for I place myself at your disposal;" and with another profound reverence, he seated himself again.

The swift blood surged to my very forehead as I met his laughing, honest eyes, and my heart—I knew not why—gave a sudden throb for a second; then I laughed and said nonchalantly:

"Well, then, Sir Knight, see that in half an hour you are in readiness to accompany Mildred and myself to the lake; and if you prove yourself an agreeable companion, I shall often make such demands upon your time?"

I hastened up stairs to array myself for the walk; Katie was dusting the steps, and I determined to ask her a question.

"Katie, was there any one ill this morning that your mistress was called away so early and has stayed so long?"

"Indeed, I don't know, miss. My mistress is a queer woman; I'm thinking she did not care to be home when Mr. Philip was here; I'm sure he wouldn't care, or Miss Mildred either, for she pesters the life out of them when she gets the chance. You'll find her out when you've been here long enough. She does queer things sometimes! She's crazy to get whatever she can, she's always begging and getting, rich as she is. Why, it's true she went down to old Michael Lane's, where a stranger woman had just died, and took the frizzle—"

"Frisette?" I suggested, with a smile.

"Took the frissette off her head and the gold ring from her finger and carried them away! And then the mean things she does! making up medicines out of old roots and trash, and pretending to give them to sick folks as a sure cure, and then sending for the money for her stuff, when they never thought by her words that she wanted pay for it; and then to think of her making broth of tainted meat and carrying it to sick people, and all such things! Ah, she's an odd one! and they all know it, too; and wasn't poor Mr. Fernley's life shortened by her goings on? And all this wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for the way she uses poor Miss Mildred."

"Hush, Katie!" whispered I hastily, glancing round, and feeling half guilty for listening to all this talk from a servant about her mistress. "Is it right for you to speak so of Mrs. Fernley?"

"It's all true, miss! Any one will tell you how she has gone into the poor girl's room at night, even when her father was living, and beat, and pinched, and torment-

ed her just for nothing at all! And even now she hardly dare say her soul is her own before Mrs. Fernley. I'll warrant you'd find her arms black and blue now if you could see them. Ah! she a sly one! She can be polite, and smooth, and sleek, like a purring old cat, but her velvet paws have got sharp claws in them, as Miss Millie can tell you!"

"But what does she do so for?" I asked.

"O, it's the money! She doesn't want her to have the same as her own children, but she can't help the will, and so she spits out her spite by abusing her. Many's the time she used to flog Mr. Philip when he was young, going into his room at night and beating him, but he's a man now and doesn't fear her; he only comes home once in a while. Law! Miss Constance and Miss Eleanor know it all! They aint no more like her than I am! She wont show her claws before you, though!"

"There!" I exclaimed, "you must not say any more to me;" and I hurried to my room to get my cloak and hat.

My head was full, and my hands, too, seemed likely to be, for I felt that I must befriend Mildred, and do my utmost to cheer Eleanor and Constance. Surely I had been sent to Fernley Hall for something. Then a vision of brown eyes and smiling lips came into my mind, and I felt so strangely! What could it mean? I was not in love with Philip Fernley? Preposterous! I, a staid damsel of twenty, fall in love with a stranger at first sight? The bare idea should be banished from my thoughts instantly!

"Well, this is pleasant for a November morning!" I cried, as our trio tripped down the steps, and into the road, crushing the sere brown leaves under our feet. I gazed regretfully back at the high front windows where the two girls stood, playfully waving adieux and throwing kisses.

Everything was novel and strange to me, and I enjoyed the walk in the frosty air intensely. When our destination was reached, I expressed my delight quite enthusiastically, for the lake, with a wintry sternness around its waters, the purple fuzzy hills, and the bare gray masses of rock among which its sombre depths lay, seemed as beautiful to me as if the verdure of summer flourished on its banks, and a warmer sky gave an azure hue to its waves.

"I'll climb the turret of this elfin cas-

tle!" I said merrily, as I reached a huge pile of rocks; "I would like a good view of the scenery around. I can think of nothing else but

"The steep frowning glories of dark Loch na Garr."

"O don't, pray, get Byronic, dear Gertrude!" laughed Mildred.

She and her brother were sitting below on a large stone, while I, from my rocky perch, gazed out on the gray glittering waves and the distant hills, and shuddered as I thought of the fate of the maiden about whom my friend had told me.

Thus we sat, musing and chatting anon, until, from my lofty seat, I descried in the distance what appeared to me a gentleman and lady on horseback, approaching the lake. I pointed them out to my companions, when Mildred exclaimed:

"Certainly those are Constance and Sir Edmund! What could have induced her to come out when she is so ill this morning!"

"If it is as Nell tells me, Millie, that her illness is of the mind more than the body, the cause of the change is obvious," I answered. . .

Philip had caught my words and said thoughtfully:

"I hope my little sister's heart will not break for love of Sir Edmund Lovell!"

How gloriously beautiful was Constance as the pair rode up, and we exchanged salutations! Gone the listlessness, the pallor, the melancholy sadness! Her radiant eyes beamed out from under her hat of blue velvet, whose white waving plume fell over her changing sunny hair, and the delicate pink of her cheeks deepened brightly as she met Sir Edmund's glances of admiration. Her escort was tall, lithe, and graceful, with the blackest of hair and eyes. As I watched his gestures and listened to his easy flow of speech, delivered with such winning smiles, I ceased to wonder at Constance's infatuation. And surely no betrothed lover could have been more devotedly tender in word or manner than was he in speaking with my cousin or attending to her requests. We forbore remarking upon her appearing so unexpectedly, out of regard to her feelings; she was so sweet and charming we could only rejoice at the change and hope for its continuance.

Sir Edmund dined at Fernley Hall that day. Dinner was waiting for us on our return. Mrs. Fernley was at home, and presided at the table with her usual politeness and ease. I found opportunity to whisper to Eleanor:

"Do you see what a different creature Constance is?"

"Yes!" she replied, "she was another girl when Sir Edmund called requesting her to accompany him to the lake. I overheard his excuses for not coming oftener, and she, poor thing, believed every word, and became the radiant damsel you now behold her."

That evening there could not have been a merrier group than we were, assembled in the great parlor, engaged with music, chess and backgammon, interspersed with laughter and jest. My hostess did not appear in the room all the evening, so, unrestrained by her presence, we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. When I retired to my room that night the thought flashed into my brain that I would share Mildred's apartment henceforth, and thus prevent any further cruel conduct on the part of her stepmother toward her. I would brave any opposition from the lady herself; I would gain my point, for I was determined to oppose such injustice. I walked through the winding passages, and reaching Mildred's door entered softly, to her great astonishment.

"Where is your light?" I said, "and you have no fire!"

"No," she replied, "Mrs. Fernley does not allow such luxuries to me."

In a trice I flew to my own room and back with my own lamp, and on ringing for Katie, she answered my summons immediately, when I requested her to build a fire in the chamber. Though somewhat astonished, she obeyed, and Mildred and I were soon comfortably seated before the cheerful blaze, talking together. Presently the catlike footsteps were heard approaching, and we turned to meet Mrs. Fernley's great gray orbs staring amazedly at our cosy cheerfulness.

"What are you doing here, Miss Lester?" she asked, in a quiet, yet somewhat displeased tone of voice, her tall form towering over me, and her eye fixed on me in a manner intended to be very intimidating.

"O, Mrs. Fernley!" I exclaimed, care-

lessly, yet firmly, and raising my eyes boldly to meet hers. "I don't intend rooming alone in that great chamber, imagining all sorts of frightful things, when Millie and I can have such delightful times together!"

"Ah," she drawled, "I should think you would not care to room with Mildred when she is so nervous and strange at times, indeed almost insane! doing such unheard-of things, and often not realizing the meaning of what she is saying to any one!"

Mildred rose with blazing cheeks and quivering lips, flashing her dark eyes at her stepmother as she endeavored to speak.

"Do you see, dear Miss Gertrude, her excitability of manner, her extreme nervousness? It cannot be passion; no lady allows herself to get out of temper that way!"

"Good-night, Mrs. Fernley," said I, bowing; "it's quite late, and I'm very sleepy; Mildred, aren't you?"

My hostess slowly withdrew, and I locked the door satisfied with my performance.

"What would she have done had I not been here, Mildred?" I asked.

"Tortured me with her venomous words, and it may be struck me had I attempted to defend myself," she answered bitterly. "If she would only—" she turned hastily with crimsoned face.

"Only what, darling?" I questioned, coming to her side.

"Only cease interfering with myself and Mr. Endicott!" she answered, hesitatingly.

"Ah! there's a gentleman in the case, is there? and where is he now, and why does your mother interfere with your love affairs?"

"He is living in the town of Radnor, twenty miles away. He was here three months ago, and Mrs. Fernley was certain he showed particular attention to Eleanor, and almost had it settled that it should be a match. Since his departure we have corresponded, and—and—"

"O, I see, my dear Mildred! and so Mrs. Fernley is going to annoy you as much as she can because you bore away the prize she intended for Eleanor! Why, I'm sure Nell never thought of such a thing!"

"I know it. O Gertrude! I could bear her ill-usage, her sly, tantalizing ways, and all, if she only will not fill Howard's ears with her cruel fabrications! And I know

by her eyes she will do her utmost to hurt me in his estimation?"

"O, it will all be right yet, never fear!" replied I, cheerfully.

Next morning Mrs. Fernley was again absent, not returning till breakfast was nearly over, and I thought she regarded Mildred with a triumphant expression in her cold eyes. As I stood by the parlor fire an hour afterward, Katie entered with coals, and by her looks intimated that she was possessed of something which she wished to communicate to me. As Mr. Fernley and Eleanor were in the room I said:

"Katie, I want your assistance in removing some articles from my room into the one Mildred and I are going to occupy. We will go now, if you have the time."

As soon as we were out of hearing, she began:

"The old lady is up to some mischief now, for certain. This morning I saw her go off with that ugly thing of a Shaker bonnet—pasteboard and silk—she's a perfect fright in it. She went in a great hurry, and she hadn't gone but a little way when I saw something white on the ground that I knew she must have dropped. I went quick and picked it up, and I declare if it wasn't a letter with Mr. Endicott's name on it! That's Miss Mildred's beau, I'm thinking, by what I heard and saw when he was here, and Mrs. Fernley always was dead set against it, and you may depend it's for no good she's a writing to him!"

"What did you do with it?" I asked, eagerly.

"O, I knew she'd come back after it, so I put it where I found it, and got out of sight, and sure enough she trotted back for it; she was going to meet the postman, I'll be bound!"

"Thanks for your information, Katie, I'll see to it!" I exclaimed, as a bright idea darted into my brain.

I locked the door of the room which I at first occupied, and opening my little desk prepared to write to Mr. Endicott.

This was the result of my half hour's seclusion in my great lonely room:

"MR. ENDICOTT,—Dear Sir—Should you receive a letter from Mrs. Fernley of Fernley Hall, containing false insinuations against Miss Mildred Fernley, you will consider it the production of an unscrupulous,

deceitful woman who is endeavoring to lower the young lady in your esteem. Could you make it convenient to come to the Hall, soon? Miss Fernley is certainly not as felicitously situated as possible.

"Your friend, GERTRUDE LESTER."

Next morning I rose a little before day-break, and walked two miles to deposit my precious epistle, having gained from my good Katie all necessary directions. I said nothing to Mildred of what I had done; it would be a sweet surprise for her if he could come to Fernley Hall.

The short November days sped away as swiftly as winged creatures, and I was very happy in my new home, because Eleanor and Constance seemed so cheerful and light of heart. Sir Edmund came frequently, and in his society my beautiful cousin was as radiant as June sunshine. My heart would whisper now and then that there was another cause for my happiness. A certain pair of honest yet mirthful eyes had looked into mine at parting with Mr. Philip Fernley, and a low voice had said:

"You will remember me, Miss Gertrude!"

That was all.

"Mamma is going away!" exclaimed Constance, coming into the parlor one morning, where I sat working a fire screen, which I intended as a Christmas gift to Mildred.

"Indeed! Where is she going, and how long will she stay?"

"O, an aunt of hers, an old lady, aged a hundred or so, is dangerously ill, and mamma fancies some of her wonderful mixtures will cure her, or if they prove unsuccessful, she may be needed there when the will is read; she may receive a legacy of some half dozen old nightcaps, or an old silk stocking containing a handful of antedated coins!" rattled Constance, gayly. "By the by," she continued, "what makes Mildred so gloomy lately?"

"I suspect it is because she has not heard from her adorer for a long time. It is strange, for she writes often, and I almost fancy there is some roguery about it."

Constance's eyes lifted suddenly, but she said nothing.

It seemed like another house when Mrs. Fernley's grim presence had departed. Every one's laugh had a new ring, and their words a new liveliness. Connie came to me after her mother had gone

with a bundle of letters tied carefully together.

"Where do you think these came from?" she cried.

I glanced at them—they were all addressed to Miss Mildred Fernley, and were in a bold manly hand. The half-suspected truth flashed over me.

"Your mamma intercepted these?"

"Exactly; here are four letters, and doubtless she has as many times prevented Mildred's communications from reaching him. I searched her room till I found them, and I shall take them to my sister and make her smile again."

She had been gone half an hour when I heard the distant sound of wheels. It stopped; then I heard the rumbling again in the distance. Presently a gentleman appeared to my view, walking hurriedly towards the mansion. He was pale and anxious-looking, and ever and anon glanced eagerly at the windows. He knocked, and was ushered into the room where I sat. He advanced to me with a bow, and smile, saying:

"I presume this is my friend, Miss Lester?"

I cried delightedly:

"O, you are Mr. Endicott!" and Mildred coming in just then, I rushed from the room, leaving the lovers together, and hastened to tell Nell and Constance.

I sat in Mildred's room alone, when, an hour later, she came in all blushes and smiles.

"O you darling!" she cried, clasping me, and raining kisses on my forehead. "You have been the means of making me so supremely happy! And O, do you know, Howard wishes me to marry him immediately, that is, in about a week or two, while Mrs. Fernley is absent. Shall I consent, Gertrude?"

I was perfectly excited, and danced round the room in a way that astonished sedate Millie.

"Consent! of course you shall! O, it will be charming!" And seizing her arm, I half dragged her into Nellie's room where she and Constance sat together.

"O girls! here's a wedding on the *tapis*!" I shouted, and in half an hour the matter was decided upon by the quartet. Everything was favorable; Mrs. Fernley would not be at home for three weeks. Mildred should have as grand a wedding as Fernley

Hall could afford. Eleanor sought assistance from several friends which was gladly given, and those winter days proved delightfully busy.

The marriage day dawned clear and fair, and the old Hall, decorated and beautified, was a scene of joyful preparation and bustle. At eleven the guests began to assemble. Sir Edmund, a friend of his—Mr. Stanley—asked at his particular request, and Miss Blanche Orville, were among the invited. Constance was sweet in her blue silk and pearls. Eleanor was queenly in her garnet velvet and white lace, and the fair bride was charming all in a mist of soft white drapery, her dark eyes glowing with a tender light, and her face beaming with a joyous trust as she met Howard Endicott's kind look fixed upon her so lovingly.

It was a brilliant assembly, and every one praised the decorations, the fair sisters, and above all, the beautiful bride.

After the ceremony, and the wedding breakfast, the guests proceeded to amuse themselves with music and dancing. I felt Eleanor's hand on my arm, and heard her whisper in my ear:

"Look at Miss Orville! How bewilderingly beautiful she is to-day, and Sir Edmund cannot leave her side! A moment ago I heard Mrs. Orville remark to a friend that Sir Edmund was particularly attentive to Blanche, and that he would, doubtless, declare his attentions very soon. I happened to glance round, and caught Constance's eye fixed upon Mrs. Orville, while her cheeks and lips were bloodless. I can see her nowhere about the rooms, Gertrude, I fear she has gone to her chamber. Will you slip out presently and see if you can find her?"

"I will go instantly," I replied, and stealing out of the drawing-room I hastened to Constance's room and knocked gently. She made no response, so I opened the door and entered. The still form of my cousin lay upon the lounge, the rich silk fell to the floor in disordered folds, and the pearls were unfastened that bound her bright hair. A deathly hue was on her face—she could not be dead! I applied all the remedies I knew of, having first gone in search of Katie, who did her utmost to bring consciousness back to her dear young mistress, and our efforts were at last rewarded. Constance slowly opened

her eyes, to close them again with a sigh as she met my gaze, and her little hands clasped themselves over her heart as if it had been sorely smitten.

"No one must know of this yet," said I. "I will not even tell Eleanor until the guests have gone. You must stay here while I go down again, Katie."

So I left the faithful Katie to bathe the white temples and chafe the tiny hands of the fair girl in her heart sorrow. A few questioned me when I came back to the gay scene as to the cause of Constance's absence, and I tried to answer carelessly that she was very tired and was obliged to lie down.

"Poor thing! she had been toiling hard lately preparing for the wedding!" and they were all so sympathetic!

Blanche was dancing with Sir Edmund—how I hated the very sight of him, fascinating as he was!—and Eleanor—my very staid Eleanor!—she, too, was in the mazy dance. And who was her partner? Sir Edmund's friend, Mr. Horace Stanley! They seemed mutually pleased, and I rejoiced to see Eleanor so gay and happy looking.

When Mildred Endicott retired to doff her white attire, and array herself in travelling costume preparatory to going away, I told her of Constance.

"Alas, poor sister! why must such great happiness come to one, and such misery to another, and both under the same roof! Am I really to be out of the sound of Mrs. Fernley's tormenting voice, and out of reach of her hands? Such a cruel letter as she wrote to Howard! I could never speak of it till now, Gertrude. She said that I was scarcely ever in my right mind, and even declared that I had stolen jewels and other things from her room!"

Constance lay with closed eyes as we entered to inform her of Mildred's approaching departure. She essayed to smile as her sister, tenderly taking her hands, and kissing her, bade her adieu; and to the pale lips came the trembling words, "God bless you, dearest Mildred!"

The carriages, with their freight of beauty, and fashion, and gayety, rolled one after another, away. Nell and I could not restrain the tears, as, standing on the steps, we watched the bride and her proud and happy husband depart, smiling back and watching us till they had gone from our

view entirely, away out into the wide world together, and we two alone with our sorrow. The tears fell afresh for the stricken one for whose malady we knew no earthly remedy.

The days passed slowly away; dear Constance seemed quite her old smiling self some days, but I could see it was but assumed gayety, put on to blind our anxious eyes. She would sit for hours in her room alone, and when I, fearing the effect of such sad lonely musings, would often enter and strive to divert her, she would raise her mournful eyes and shake her head sadly, as if she divined my intentions and doubted the efficacy of any attempts to remove her heart-sorrow. Sometimes we prevailed upon her to come down to the parlor, where we tried to cheer her with music and books, and now and then a few friends; but she preferred sitting by her own window, quietly gazing out on the snowy hills, and the dreary winter sky.

Mrs. Fernley, on her return, dared not give expression to her chagrin before her guest or her daughters, so poor Katie was obliged to take the benefit of her opinion as to our proceedings during her absence. She seemed anxious about Constance, who, though always respectful towards her mother, preferred the society of Eleanor or myself, as Mrs. Fernley was constantly urging her to consult a physician or to swallow some of her worthless concoctions.

In the meantime Mr. Stanley came often to the Hall, though Sir Edmund's visits ceased, and we heard from a reliable source that he was engaged to Miss Orville. I never could gain from Constance a word as to the cause of her depression and weakness, though I was aware of it, but one pleasant afternoon as we were talking together, she lying on the couch, and I sitting by with my hand gently smoothing her long golden curls, she looked up with a faint smile and said in a calm, quiet voice:

"I wonder when Sir Edmund and Blanche will be married?"

"Why, are they to be married, dear?" I asked, unconcernedly.

"Gertrude, do you know that I heard Sir Edmund say to Blanche, as they stood in the curtained recess on that dreadful morning, that she was the only one whose eyes had thrilled him through, whose love he had desired to possess, and that she

must be his, or he should be the most wretched of men! Ah, dear Gertrude, that was my deathblow! You may do all you can for me, but it will be in vain! I am fading away. None can know how deeply, how truly I loved him, how my heart bounded at a look—a word from him, and ah me! his tender glance often gave me occasion to imagine he loved me; often have his honeyed words of affection set me in a sweet flutter of delight. When I saw him not for many days, and heard of his driving and walking with her, how my poor heart ached, and my life seemed robbed of all its beauty without his presence and smile. May you never have to pass through these wretched scenes, dear Gertrude?"

I clasped the slender form, and cried:

"O Constance, my dear friend, live for your sister, your brother, and your cousin, who are all so ardently attached to you, whose lives will be dark indeed without you! You may live above this grief yet, and enjoy the fair things of earth for a long season."

"I cannot remain with you long, Gertrude. I shall go where all these woes are unknown. I have tried to be brave, and bear it all quietly, and secretly, but it is wearing me out, I must succumb!"

Sometimes when the outer world was glorious with a fairy-land glitter, the earth comely in her sparkling snow robe, and wreath of icicle jewels, I would wheel the easy-chair to the window that she might be cheered by the radiant scene; when she would cry out in momentary agony:

"How can nature look so beautiful when my heart is so sore and smitten! I cannot endure this mockery! Why must my sufferings be so great, so unendurable?"

One afternoon Mr. Stanley came, accompanied by Sir Edmund, who greeted Eleanor and myself with his accustomed politeness, and asked carelessly after Constance, saying he had heard she was very ill. I attempted to conceal my feelings towards him, yet could not forbear giving him a stern searching glance as I said:

"Indeed! considering your former intimacy you might have come oftener to inquire concerning her health. She has been ill a long time."

Having occasion to go up stairs very soon, I was astonished at seeing Constance leaning over the balustrade, her long hair

streaming over her blue cashmere wrapper, her cheeks flushed and her eyes strained wildly.

"Constance, darling!" I cried, "why are you here? you are too weak to stand in the cold this way!"

"Did I not hear Sir Edmund's step? his voice? How dare he come!" Her tone rose almost to a shriek. I feared her reason was going from her.

"Yes, he is here; do not care; he never was worth your affection, dear Constance;" and I led her to her room again, bidding her be still while I prepared some refreshment for her, though I knew well she would refuse to partake of any nourishment, and indeed had done so for some time, to our great distress.

I went to the kitchen to perform my task, which it took me a long time to do. Mrs. Fernley was out on one of her eccentric journeys as usual; I was alone, and while my hands were busy, my mind was revolving over the strange events which had transpired since my arrival at the Hall. A short time had brought about such changes! As I passed the drawing-room door on my way up stairs, I heard from within a sound of rippling girlish laughter, rather high and forced, and a merry voice uttering some remark. Who could be there? With a vague premonition in my mind, I placed the tray on the hall table and opened the door. How can I describe the scene that met my astonished gaze! There sat Constance, arrayed in the blue silk and pearls she had worn at the wedding, her eyes so fearfully brilliant I could not bear to meet them, her cheeks flushed; and having an air of wild mirthfulness, a sort of intense triumph of pride over bodily weakness, and mental agony. The usually calm and composed Sir Edmund was evidently ill at ease, and his eyes dropped before the glittering blue orbs that flashed their light upon him, as their owner addressing him from time to time with smiling grace and piquancy. Mr. Stanley sat gazing at the strangely glowing beauty of the fair Constance, who had so astonished them by her appearance. Eleanor seemed like one unable to speak or move; she could only glance at me appealingly, and I understood her look. With a struggle I mastered my emotion, and advancing towards Constance, placed my hand on her shoulder, saying, playfully:

"Come, runaway! you are not well enough yet to remain here long at a time. You must take a little rest now."

I fixed my eyes steadily upon her, and she gave a long sigh, rising mechanically to follow me, and taking leave of the gentlemen with the utmost courtesy, though I saw it was with an effort. When we reached her room a sudden reaction succeeded this unusual excitement, and she lay on the couch completely exhausted, *deathly and still, cheeks and lips bloodless, and blue eyes closed wearily.*

"I will soon be over," she sighed faintly.

I heard the gentlemen depart, and ran for Eleanor, who took my hand silently, while her eyes looked sorrowfully into mine. A sudden awful chill struck through us as we entered, as if some dread presence were in that still chamber. The winter sunbeams strayed in through the red curtains, and fell upon the *rose-strewn carpet*, and the sculptured Psyche in the corner. There was the empty velvet chair by the great window, there stood the pretty work-table with its elegant belongings, there were the rare mantel ornaments, and we heard the tick of the tiny watch in its crimson case. What made us shudder in the stifling silence? What made our pulses suddenly seem to stop, and our tongues dumb with horror as we glanced towards that couch? There was the sweet dead face, its laughing joyousness gone out, *like the sky brightness when the dark cloud spreads suddenly*; there were the dead hands clasped over the poor heart, once so sorely stricken, and now at rest. The idle winter beams streamed over the lifeless form, so beautiful even in death, and we knelt by the cold clay, moaning in our utter woe, mourning the blighted bud that had opened so brightly!

Mrs. Fernley refused all offers of comfort and sympathy, shutting herself up in her room, and refusing to hold intercourse with any one; so she was left undisturbed.

The beautiful dead was buried away; the winter snows spread a white covering over her grave, and Fernley Hall was quiet for many days, without sound of laughter or song.

Eleanor and I were invited to Miss Blanche Orville's wedding, but we declined going. How could we enjoy the brilliant assemblage, the mirth, the festivity, when Constance's laugh was hushed forever, her voice silent in death!

So we two, drawn together by strongest ties of love and sympathy, lived quietly with our books and needle-work while the visits of Mr. Stanley enlivened the quiet monotony of our life. Mrs. Fernley seemed to grow taller, and thinner, and grimmer with her sorrow; she spoke rarely, and remained much alone. She never mentioned either Mildred or Constance, and did not seem affected when others referred to them.

We often heard from Mildred Endicott; she was happy in her husband's love and constant devotion, and her letters cheered our hours of sadness.

The winter passed away; the spring-time brightened the domain of Fernley Hall, and a new sunlight seemed beaming upon Eleanor's life, for she stole to my side one evening, after Mr. Stanley had gone from the house where he had made a very long call, and *blushingly told me of her engagement to that gentleman.*

"I told him I didn't love him enough," she said, as she toyed with the ring upon her taper finger. "It seems to me sometimes, Gertrude, that I never can love any one as I did Doctor Arnton; but of course, I must forget that, and be as happy as I can with Horace's love, for he loves me devotedly. Do you ever wonder how Phil is getting along?" she suddenly asked, twining my hair around her fingers, and looking into my eyes, which quickly dropped at her question. "Ah! I didn't know I could make you blush so easily! Well, it's queer he hasn't written for ever so long a time. If he and Sir Edmund Lovell should ever meet, I fear Philip will not treat him with the greatest courtesy possible, as I hinted to him the cause of Constance's death, when I wrote the account of that sad event. I hope nothing has happened, for your sake as much as any other reason. I would like for him to be home at my wedding; I am to be married in six weeks—it seems very soon." She spoke rather sadly, I thought.

The weeks soon brought the quiet wedding-day, when Eleanor was to leave the old Hall as a bride. I liked the appearance of Mr. Stanley, and rejoiced that Eleanor was to forget the sad past and be happy. We had arranged it that I should, after her departure, go to visit Mildred in her pleasant home, as she had most earnestly solicited my doing so, and on

Eleanor's return to the Hall to spend a few weeks in the autumn, I was to come and meet her there.

"Phil may be here, too, by that time?" she said, archly, while I felt my cheeks quickly reddening.

Mrs. Fernley seemed well pleased with Mr. Stanley as a son-in-law. She moved about with her usual stealthiness, and smoothness, and continued to indulge in her eccentricities; the servants found fault with her interference and ill usage at times, but I never could complain of her conduct towards me.

I did pity the stern old lady, so lonely in that great house, when I had gone from beneath its roof, where I had passed six changeful months. I was delighted at the thought of seeing dear Mildred again, and how my heart bounded when I heard her cheery tones welcoming me to her home! Ah, those sweet, golden summer days, they glided away all too swiftly!

I received, while there, a letter from Mr. Fernley, saying that he expected to be at the Hall when Eleanor and myself should visit there in October. I read that letter over and over again, all by myself, pondering every little friendly expression, and then calling myself a fool for such absurdity.

At length the glorious October, the blithest month of all the year in my opinion, came with her fruits, her gorgeous robes, her bracing weather, and dreamy Indian summer days, and with it a letter from Fernley Hall, with Eleanor Stanley's signature, saying that I must come immediately, and she wished Mildred would accompany me. Mildred declined going, however, as she did not wish ever again to encounter Mrs. Fernley, if such a meeting could be avoided.

"Well," I said, as I took my seat in the old stagecoach, "if Mrs. Fernley should take it into her head to go off on a jaunt, we will telegraph at once, so that you may come in her absence, as you went?"

She agreed to the proposal laughingly. Ah! that sunny morning! Why was there not some premonitory sign, something to warn us of the gloom ahead!

The old Hall was bathed in the golden beams of the declining sun as I drove up, and vividly came to my mind the form of sweet Constance as she appeared that morning on which we visited the lake;

standing by the great diamond-paned window, gazing out and sadly smiling upon us.

Katie came to the door, joyful at seeing me, and ushered me into the parlor, where I was soon clasped to Eleanor's heart, and looked into her dear face again. She was happy, I settled it within myself, she appeared peaceful and contented, and to my inquiries she answered:

"My husband is kind and affectionate, and my life glides very smoothly by. I have no reason to complain, but every reason to be happy."

Philip had not yet arrived, but he was expected daily. Mrs. Fernley looked as stern and prim as ever, and was very reticent and cold. She gave up the oversight of household matters entirely to Eleanor on her arrival, and seldom appeared at table or in the parlors with us.

One bright afternoon I went alone to take a long ramble in the breezy October woods, where the yellow beams flickered among the crimson and gold leaves. I wove a garland for my hat, and started for home towards sunset with my hands full of the beautiful leaves, intending to adorn my chamber with my spoils. I had reached the road, and was walking briskly towards the Hall, when I espied a gentleman advancing on horseback. As he came nearer I thought his countenance seemed familiar, yet where I had seen him I could not recollect. He passed bowing, and I, puzzling my brains to find out what made me take such interest in the identity of a passing stranger, reached home, and rushed into the parlor with my treasures. There to my amazement sat Philip Fernley! I started and blushed, while Eleanor smiled at my discomfiture, and her husband looked up from his paper with a queer expression on his face as he noticed our embarrassed, yet hearty greeting. When I had recovered the free use of my usually busy tongue, I turned to Nell, saying that I had met a strange gentleman whom I almost fancied I had seen before.

"Such stern grave eyes, and stately mien! O?" I cried, as a swift recollection darted upon me, "it was—" I stopped suddenly, glancing up at Eleanor.

She turned a shade paler, then rose and walked carelessly towards the piano.

"I suppose it was Doctor Arnton from your description; you have seen his

portrait, I think, and I believe he is somewhere in this region. Don't take too much interest in him, Gertrude, dear, he is married, you know!"

She laughed constrainedly. I noticed her listlessness and lack of animation that evening. Could she still cherish that man's image in her heart of hearts? and would her life wear out as Constance's had done? Mr. Stanley observed her dullness, and was kind and tender to the extreme. A shadow seemed gathering again in Fernley Hall!

Next morning we went for a horseback ride to the lake. The beauty of the day seemed to revive Eleanor's drooping spirits, and she looked queenly as she rode with her handsome husband. My escort and I went leisurely along, praising the glowing brightness of the scenery, and enjoying thoroughly the excursion. Every glance into his face showed me those earnest brown eyes looking into mine with a world of meaning, and I suddenly felt the flush deepening on my face, and my voice trembled as I chatted carelessly, though often confusedly.

As we returned, all riding merrily together, we met the same gentleman whom I had encountered the day before. He touched his hat as he saw Eleanor, who bowed, graceful and smiling. She turned on me a troubled look as he passed, then the pair whipped up their horses, and vanished out of our sight. Soon I pointed out to my companion a tall gentleman on foot, some distance behind, exclaiming:

"Isn't that Sir Edmund Lovell?"

"Ay! so it is; wait here by this tree while I ride back, I have something to say to him, and 'twere best you should not hear! I have longed to meet that man ever since poor Constance's death!"

I waited with a sudden fear at my heart. I saw them talking together, and the breeze brought the sound of their rising voices to my anxious ear. Then I saw Sir Edmund raise his hand, Philip fell backward from his saddle; the horse rushed away past me like a mad thing, and Sir Edmund had vanished from sight! Summoning all my fortitude, and urged by my growing love for Philip Fernley, I rode swiftly to his side. He was lying on the ground senseless. I lifted the brown clustering hair from his temples, and gazed on his pale face. Had his spirit gone? Would those

dear eyes never again meet my own? I was wild with the bare thought; I stooped and pressing my lips to his brow, I called madly to him to live for my sake! His eyes slowly unclosed and his white lips murmured:

"My darling! I will live for your sake! I am not seriously injured, only stunned by the blow from that villain's hand! I accused him of being the cause of my sister's death, and he could not abide such an accusation, forsooth!"

I assisted him to rise, and we slowly rode home to recite our adventure.

"And if I may judge from your looks there is something else to tell," said Mr. Stanley, archly. We smiled and said nothing.

Day after day I noticed Eleanor's growing pallor and melancholy. One morning she came to my room, and sitting beside me, said in a sorrowful tone that touched my heart, it so sounded like Constance:

"Gertrude, dear, I am very, very unhappy!"

"Unhappy, dearest Eleanor! what is the cause? You have everything to make you otherwise!"

"Gertrude! I love Doctor Arnton as I love no other human being! I love him, though I am wedded to another, to one who adores me, and cares for me most tenderly! I thought I could quell and crush it, but I have seen him, Gertrude. I met him again yesterday as we were walking, Horace and I, and O, the old love rises strongly up in my soul, and I am miserable, utterly miserable!" And she paced the floor, clasping her small hands in her wretchedness.

I strove to cheer and divert her, but she could only say:

"I am miserable, utterly miserable! How can I endure it?"

The next evening as we sat in the parlor, Philip and I looking at some views he had brought with him, and talking gayly, while Eleanor sat silent and pale, complaining of a headache, and Mr. Stanley, tenderly solicitous sat by her side, Philip suddenly exclaimed, "I wonder what Ned Arnton is doing this way! I have not seen him yet, though I heard of his being in the neighborhood. They say he lost his wife soon after his marriage. You remember, Nell, we used to twit you on being his

charmer, when he was here with me long ago!"

"I scarcely can remember anything, Philip, my head aches so badly," she replied, while the hand that was across her eyes trembled violently.

Presently she rose, saying she would retire early, and compose her head, and bidding us be merry without her presence, she left the room, giving us one long look as she did so.

My interest in the pictures, in the conversation, in everything, was gone; a dead weight seemed bearing down my soul. I went to the piano, and sought by the performance of the most brilliant music to drive away the indefinable feeling of terror that almost choked me. Suddenly I started, exclaiming:

"Did not some one open the outer door?"

Philip smiled and said:

"You are very nervous this evening, Gertrude. I heard nothing. Let us practice a duet, if you choose, to pass the time away pleasantly."

I assented, but my mind refused to place itself on my task. I felt a something within impelling me to go to Eleanor's room, I knew not why. I left the music stool and rushed hastily out while Philip stared in consternation at my sudden exit, and Mr. Stanley looked as if I were an insane person. I hurried to Mrs. Stanley's chamber—she was not there! I was hastening down again in my wild terror, when my eye caught a folded paper on the dressing-table. I tore it open and read the following:

"My life is miserable; I can endure it no longer. I love another than him whom I have promised to love always; I love hopelessly. The waters in which the maiden of Cairn Castle ended her woes shall close over me and my wretchedness. Farewell, Horace, you were always kind to me; and Philip and Gertrude, you will be happy. May Heaven forgive me.

"ELEANOR."

I flew wildly down to the parlor; Mrs. Fernley had just entered. Speechless I placed the note in Mr. Stanley's hand, and fell in a swoon on the floor.

When my senses returned I was in my own room, weak and ill. Strange faces were around me, friends who had come to care for me, and who told me, in answer to my inquiries, that I had been ill three weeks of brain fever, and delirious all the time.

"And Eleanor! O, did they go and find her?" I cried.

Then they told me, with saddening faces, to hush and be quiet, and I knew all—all! When I grew stronger and could bear it, Philip told me of their fruitless search for many days, for the poor lost one, of Horace's grief and despair—he had gone to a distant land—of Mrs. Fernley's strange moroseness and reservedness, and of her departure to reside with a relative, leaving him as he rightfully was—master of Fernley Hall.

It is our home now—Philip's and mine. Mildred comes to visit us often, and nothing disturbs our happiness but old memories at times, and the sight of those glittering waves in the distance.

THE FIRST KATYDID.

BY ADA. M. KENICOTT.

SHUT up in a glass jar, with a piece of paper, cut full of holes, pasted over the top. You would not have liked that situation very well? No; and it is not likely the poor katydid was pleased with it either, yet there she was obliged to stay for three days and nights, with only some cherry leaves for food, and not so much as a drop of dew to sip. There I first saw her, and wondered at her size and beauty. Such broad translucent wings and long limber feelers, such dignity of carriage and strength of voice as she possessed were enough to make any insect vain. But her greatest gift seemed likely to prove fatal to her, for she was so proud of her voice that she sometimes sung all night long, which, as she had chosen a dwelling beneath the window of a sick lady, made her quite a nuisance. After many efforts a neighbor had caught her, and here she was a prisoner.

Poor katydid! When I found her captor meant to kill her, I asked for her, and she was given to me, on condition that I would not let her escape anywhere in the vicinity. We kept her till evening, and then started out, my brother and I, to find her a home. Away down the street we went, and, when we thought ourselves far enough off, put the tiny creature on the trunk of a maple, and watched her creep up out of harm's way. She seemed very weak, and I feared

she would die, but a few evenings after, as I passed under the same tree, a strong full voice spoke out. "She did—she did; katydid—did—did?" And I knew our friend with the green wings was safe.

We surely meant no harm in leaving her there, but the little girl of the house near by said "we brought a great katydid and put it on their tree, and it sung so they could not sleep nights." I was sorry to have been the means of disturbing any one, but I wanted the poor insect to live out the short life God orders for its race, and to me it was only pleasant to hear the sharp voice call out, as I passed, "katydid—she did!" It set me thinking, too, of what many people wiser than I have wished to know—what it was that Katy really did. Poems have been written and songs sung about it, yet none of them have the story quite as it was told to me; so I will give it to you, and you may be able to tell me which is right. I heard it one lovely evening after I had returned from a walk, and, feeling too restless for sleep, had set the windows open, and let the great white moonlight go all about the room. Such moonlight! The shadows crept off among the trees, and lay close in the corners to get away from it; the dewdrops sparkled up through it, and all the flowers that bloom in the nighttime were broad awake.

It is just the night for fairies to be

abroad, thought I; how I wish one would come to tell me *what* Katy did! It must have been some dreadful thing, to be talked about so much and so long. Just then something came in at the window that was not moonlight, though it walked quite as softly—a tiny, sparkling, swaying figure, with long fair hair, fine as thistle-down. It stopped before me, exactly where the brightest beams rested, and very sweet was the small voice that said:

“Doubtless you would be surprised to learn that poor Katy did nothing at all. You shall see how it all happened.”

I was not in my room any longer, with walls to shut out the sweet night, but in the greenwood, under trees that must have reached their wide arms to the stars for hundreds of years. They all wore dewdrop gems, that flashed like diamonds. The forest was full of light and music; fairy people trooped about the greensward, danced in rings, swung on flower-stalks, and rode about in chariots drawn by magnificent black beetles. All the royal personages of fairy-land seemed to be there, princes and princesses, with gleaming silver coronets, beautiful maidens in court dresses, with long lustrous trains, and child-fairies, with golden locks, and eyes like spiderwort blossoms. While I was wondering what great occasion this might be, my little friend spoke.

“We are to have a play,” she said, “a representation of events that took place before man had so marred our realms by his hateful inventions; when we were as we ought now to be, powerful and respected. Then children and grown people, too, were careful not to offend us. Our favorite trees were not cut down, our dancing-rings trampled out, or our haunts boldly invaded in *those* days. Ah me! it is all different now. We have to hide in the depths of the wildest forests, and I think the time is not far distant when we shall conclude to leave the earth entirely. Indeed, it was only to-day that I was conferring with some of my princes upon the subject, and they thought most favorably of that plan.”

Here she paused, and I knew not what sort of a reply to make, for I plainly perceived this to be the queen of the fairies, and felt at a loss how to address so august a personage. At length I returned to inquire if she had chosen her new place of abode.

“I have often thought of the moon,” she answered; “it seems to me that to be always bathed in those pure rays would be ecstasy.”

“Has your majesty ever considered,” suggested I, “that to live in the moon would not give you the enjoyment of its beams? You would get instead the light of some other planet, and thus lose the very privilege you seek to win.”

“You speak truly,” she assented, after a pause; “yet methinks if she can render the borrowed light of the sun so attractive, her own atmosphere must be equally delightful.”

“Well,” observed I, much amused at the grave manner of this small being, “if you determine to make the journey, I trust you will allow me to accompany you, if it be in your power to grant that privilege to a mortal. I’ve no doubt a visit to the moon would make my fortune, could I be permitted to give an account of it.”

She did not seem to mind my laughing at her, but good-naturedly promised it should be as I wished, and my attention was soon absorbed by the scenes around me. Above the close-twined branches formed a lofty dome of emerald, while the shrubs clustered about made walls of the same rich color. The whole was lighted by thousands of fireflies, that, flashing from among the leaves, threw their light over the gay creatures beneath, who were lounging upon seats of the purest and most exquisitely-carved mushroom. You should have witnessed the flirtations of the tiny people—the coquettish flutter of fans, made of the finest down from humming-birds’ wings, the tossing of heads among the inhabitants of tulips and lilies, at sight of those humbler ones, who dwelt amidst cowslips, buttercups, mayweeds and the like. However, the slighted ones, who were easily recognized by their plain yellow dresses, did not seem unhappy, and took their share in the pleasures heartily.

But you are growing anxious for the play, as I did before the greetings offered to my royal friend were over. At their close she was led to a magnificent throne overlooking the stage, which, of course, I could not occupy with her, so she showed me a good place, where I amused myself by watching the privileged fairies who were nearest their queen. Having been told much of the devotion of the small people to their

sovereign, I was not a little astonished at what I heard from time to time among them.

"How horribly her majesty is looking this evening," remarked one pretty sprite to her cavalier. "I should think she would have judgment enough to leave off that lily-of-the-valley-dress on this occasion. I do not believe she has worn anything else for an age, and those flowers never seemed to me fit for a queen's robe anyway."

"Every one cannot have *your* taste," was the gallant reply, with a glance at the robe of his companion, which had evidently been cut from the most superb blossoms. "But I am told her majesty has some tender associations linked with this flower, which are connected with a mortal lover."

"I think she has a greater fancy for those huge horrible monsters than is becoming a ruler of our ethereal race."

"There's one of them here to-night," whispered a neighbor, "by her express invitation, too. It makes me shudder every time I look at the dreadful thing!" with a fierce glance at me.

"It is my opinion," spoke up another, leaning upon his sword sheath, fashioned from the polished casing of a beetle, "that it is time we interfered, and gave her to understand that these things must be put a stop to if she wishes to retain her throne."

"O hush!" from a subdued chorus of female voices; "surely such sentiments were never uttered among us before. Who ever heard of a rebellion in fairy-land?"

"No one," replied the soldier; "but there is no telling what *may* happen."

"That is true, friend," said a graver voice than had yet spoken, "especially if we all forget our duty as loyal subjects in this way."

Just then the curtain rose. As I received no copy of the play, you must be content with such a lame account of it as I can give. If my pen were cut from a diamond, and pointed with a sunbeam, it would scarcely be exquisite enough to describe that scene. Imagine a garden radiant with perfume-laden flowers, thronged with tiny lovely creatures, clad in the lightest and most shimmering robes, singing in chorus, with voices sweeter and softer than rippling water. Their song finished, the airy crowd floated away, and drifted into groups in the background, leaving a single sweet princess musing, rather sadly, I

thought; but all was changed to her, seemingly, when a gallant prince approached, and I soon gathered that the beautiful pair were enjoying their first days of wedded life.

"Didst weary for me, darling?" asked the prince, softly.

"Yea, as the rose for the south wind," was the fond reply. "What took thee from me so soon?"

"A messenger came from mine own realm with tidings, and I must not quite forget native land, even for thee, my fairest. Wilt go with me now down the lily walk?"

As they moved away, a small figure dashed forth from the jessamine that drooped near, and began tearing and trampling the grass where they had stood like a fury.

"A precious pair!" she muttered; "but I'll put a stop to your lovesick cooing very soon; and that impudent Kaithee, too—I'll not lose my revenge upon her. But I must calm myself, and be patient a little longer."

It was sad to see the wee face so distorted with passion, and, thinking upon the grievous path the feet of envy must always walk in, my mind was prepared for what followed. The garden slowly disappeared, and behold! a cavern, dark, damp, and full of loathsome things, lizards peeping from its clefts, and spiders weaving their webs about its nooks. In its centre—what? Neither fairy, nor woman, nor beast; a gnome, with hooked hands, and fiery eyes, and horrid hair. Soon a bent feeble figure entered, from the long dismal passage which led to this den, peering cautiously about at every step.

"You give yourself needless anxiety, Lady Aletha," growled the gnome; "we are alone; be sure that none but yourself would venture hither at this hour. But what would you from my aid?"

"Revenge!" answered the visitor, throwing aside her disguise, and revealing herself the angry fay of the garden; "revenge for humbled pride and scorned affection?"

The gnome laughed.

"We hear of those things sometimes, but, for my part, I know of no passion save hate. It is the bud which blossoms out into revenge, so I am at your service."

From their colloquy, which was long and excited, I gathered that Aletha was angry because the prince, who was of a country

much greater than their own, had made choice of the Lady Mella. She had hoped to win him for herself, and, failing in this, had sought to console herself with the belief that she would be chosen to control affairs in the approaching absence of the princess. When she found that Kaithee, whom she had always considered a rival, was appointed, as one best fitted, on account of her well-known modesty and wisdom, to that important trust, her anger could no longer restrain itself. She resolved on the overthrow of those whom she regarded as enemies, and for aid in this evil purpose she had sought that dreadful place.

The plan there arranged was faithfully carried out, and what a different appearance the lovely garden, which became again the scene, soon began to present! In place of happy groups dancing at eventide upon the greensward, or at play among the flower-banks, mysterious looking knots gathered in dark corners, and talked cautiously in muffled voices. Instead of bright smiles, merry laughter and sweet music, were, too often, bitter remarks, jealous frowns and threatful mutterings. It is true these were as much concealed as possible, each one striving to appear light-hearted and unconcerned as before. While Aletha was all the time sowing suspicion and hatred toward the innocent Mella, she took care to seem her most faithful friend. Having thus won her confidence, she soon began to poison, not only her mind, but that of the people against Kaithee, representing her as bold, artful and wicked, distorting her most harmless words and acts into crimes. At last the time came for the completion of the dark work.

The prince, on occasion of his return from a short absence, was to hold a brilliant fete. He also distributed presents freely among his fair bride's subjects, and the charm of his kindness, for a time, almost made them forget their unworthy designs. Aletha made choice of the second night of the festival for carrying out her plan. That eve the palace gardens seemed to have been fitted up for every kind of enjoyment; old pastimes were revived, and new ones invented. Scarce a nook but blossomed into fresh beauties, scarce a guest who did not find some grateful surprise in waiting. For a time discontent appeared banished, and one could but won-

der that any should be found who would wish to disturb such happiness. But you remember the evil one could not rest until he had brought sin and death into Eden, and his spirit remains in all hearts that permit themselves to harbor envious feelings.

As the royal pair strolled gayly down a retired walk near the borders of their domain, a knight, clad in velvet and gold, approached.

"My gracious prince," said he, bowing low as he spoke, "I crave your audience upon important business."

The prince left his fair lady, with a regretful caress, to follow the hurrying messenger, who was, as you may have suspected, a servant of Aletha's, disguised as one of his followers, and who now led him, by a circuitous route, to a grotto, which had been chosen for the purpose, really very near the spot they had left.

"Most noble prince," said he, "behold herein a maid, who lies under a cruel spell, till some brave and worthy gallant shall take her in his arms and bear her hence."

"An easy feat, truly; one which none need hesitate to undertake," replied the prince.

Bending over the maiden, who seemed in a trance, he was astonished to recognize Kaithee, who, he now remembered, had been missed that day from the palace, much to the anxiety of her mistress.

"How camest thou here, fair one?" he murmured, raising the heavy head upon his arm, and taking the cold hand in his. "Hath some evil power overcome thee? I will seek thy mistress, who will do best for thee."

So saying, he rose, or rather, tried to rise, for it proved impossible for him to move.

"You find no such light task as you imagined, brave sir," sneered the knight, dropping his disguise and revealing the green dress of Aletha's followers. "Know thou art my prisoner till such time as I see fit to release thee, and reflect that punishment is sure to follow all who scorn the peerless lady whom I serve."

* * * * *

Meanwhile Lady Mella began to grow impatient for her lord's return, and sauntered about, uneasy and troubled, in the midst of the general gayety. Aletha approached, and inquired, in a soft anxious tone, why her dear lady appeared so restless.

"My lord has been called away upon another of his mysterious missions," was the reply. "Methinks it is quite time for his return."

"I do not wonder that such neglect renders you unhappy, my sweet lady. If you could but know how I pity you, so fair, yet so soon forsaken?"

One would have thought the princess would have had pride enough to resent this impertinence, but the truth was she had for some time been giving up her mind to those suspicions the cunning Aletha so well knew how to rouse. That wicked fay had been busy, too, dropping a word here, a glance and shrug there, till many half feared the foreign prince was not what he should be, and watched him with distrust or unfriendliness.

"Why do you call me forsaken, my good Aletha?" sobbed the foolish Mella; "do you think it is so bad as that?"

"Have you, indeed, been so blinded, my most gracious lady? Is it possible you have not suspected what every one else is free to speak of, that these secret messengers come to bid him to another presence, even that of your most loved Kaithee? What means the absence of your treacherous favorite? and what keeps your loving mate from you now? Come see for yourself."

Thus saying, Aletha drew her swiftly down the border walk, and, pausing before the grotto, swept aside the leafy screen that concealed it, showing not, as she expected, Kaithee in the prince's arms, but standing and conscious, though still leaning on him for support. The enraged princess stayed for no questions, but cried:

"So, faithless wretch, this is the great affair that has taken you from me so often! You shall learn I have still loyal friends to punish a base pretender and false friend!"

With this, she blew the silver whistle for the assembling of her defenders, and no one used only to our clumsy ways could comprehend the speed with which they flocked about her. Aletha's soldiers, too, were there, raising fierce cries against the prince, while waiting the moment for destroying their sovereign.

Suddenly the prince, perfectly calm and undismayed amid the tumult, raised his hand. What a change followed that simple movement! Every traitor's fingers stiffened over the weapon they had grasped, and all

found themselves as unable to leave their places as the trees about them.

"Tell me," he demanded of Aletha, who had been urging forward her half-frantic mistress, "who has slandered me to my beloved Mella and her people?"

Aletha, seeing one part of her plan lost, still held to the other.

"Ask rather," she answered, haughtily, "who has deceived us all, and then sought to entrap you with her pretence of being enchanted. Look for an answer to your fair companion. *She did—Kaithee did!*"

All gazed upon the false fay in terror, for her voice had grown hoarser and harsher with every word, till the last was a mere croak, sounding like "*Katy did.*" Her green robe stiffened into wings; her arms dwindled, then lengthened into feelers; in short, she then and there became the insect we now call a katydid. Those who had joined in her plot were likewise changed into that form, and, as they all crept away to find a hiding-place for their shame and baffled rage, the prince cried:

"So shall it be for them and their race hereafter! They shall find I have stronger spells than they. And you, my own Mella," continued he, "will you not love me still? Kaithee is innocent of these evil charges, and as for my absences, which have so distressed you, I was preparing a surprise for yourself. I have been erecting a palace more fitting for your reception, and extending my realm so that it might join your own."

"If you still desire one so unworthy," sighed the penitent princess, "I can but crave your forgiveness, and love you the more for the generous heart that thus grants pardon even before it is asked."

"All is forgotten," was the fond response; "you are dear to me as ever. Come, my good people," turning to their now rejoicing subjects, "let us never again so hastily forsake the paths of peace and happiness."

As all took their way to the palace the curtain fell, amid a burst of joyful music, and the fairy audience rose to depart. Some seemed thoughtful, perhaps judging the play intended for their instruction. When we were alone, my friend addressed me:

"These scenes which you have just witnessed furnish the answer to your question. Those are the only words ever allowed to

the unhappy fays or their descendants, and they seem impelled to repeat them continually. I often grieve for the poor creatures now punished thus for others' faults, but the shadow of sin always reaches beyond the sinner."

"Is there no way," asked I, "by which their former estate may be regained?"

"One only," she replied. "When there is no longer a slanderer or an envious being in the world, then the katydid's voice will be heard no more."

"That will never happen," sighed I, "while the gray old earth rolls—never, until the new heavens and the new earth shall appear."

"I suppose not," answered the queen; "but I have fulfilled my promise." And before I had time for a farewell, she had flitted away. .

Turning to follow her, I awoke, if I had indeed been dreaming; but I am almost sure something whiter than the moonlight floated out of the window.